TESTS: Honda GL1200L Gold Wing Limited Edition, Kawasaki Ninja 600R, GPz550, Husqvarna 510TE

02763

CYCLE GUIDE

MARCH 1985
$1.75

KAWASAKI DUEL: NINJA 600R vs. GPz 550

Honda's Better-Than-Ever Gold Wing

$10,000 Limited Edition Luxury Liner

DIR 1033
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LARRY LAWRENCE
449 DOUGLAS DR
BROWNSBURG IN 46112

0 71486 02763

FINAL WEEKS

WORLD FAMOUS GHIBLI HELMET

IN FINAL WEEKS OF GIANT PUBLICITY DRIVE. FEW HELMETS LEFT AT $69.

THIS IS NOT *A MISPRINT*

Response to helmet promotion has been phenomenal and only a fraction of the promotional inventory is left (less than 5,000 pieces). These helmets will remain in inventory until sold, on a first come - first served basis. All helmets are first quality and come with a full one year warranty.

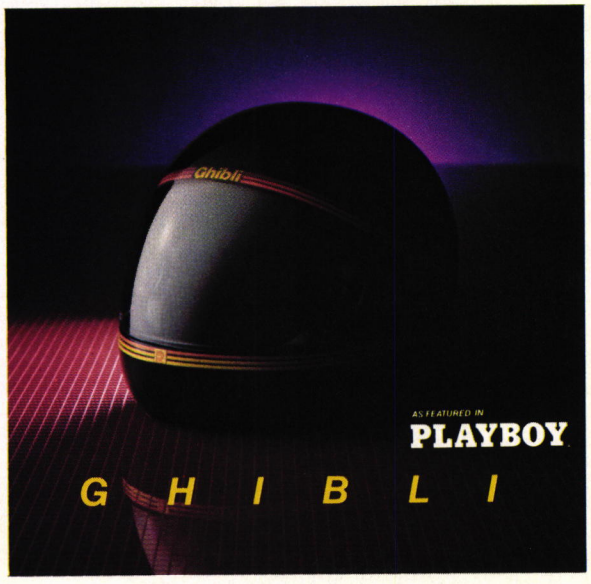
All who wish to apply for a GHIBLI HELMET should write to the company address below before Midnight, June 30, 1985

Special Note: The previous promotion of this helmet was a complete sell out - so act now for best color selection.

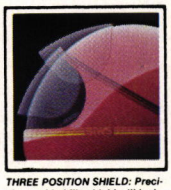
NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA Ten thousand new GHIBLI Motorcycle helmets, with lever activated, three (3) position flip shield and patented *"Easy Action"* quick release chin strap, will be sold as part of a giant publicity campaign for *$69 apiece, or 2 for *$65 ea. to the first four thousand people who write or call the company before midnight, June 30th, 1985.

These are the same famous Ghibli Helmets that retail for over $110 each and were featured in the pages of ***Playboy magazine, Ultralight, Cycle World, Cycle Guide, Rider*** and many other leading magazines and referred to as ***"the first totally new helmet to come along in a decade".***

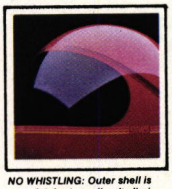
Weighing less than many open faced helmets, the Ghibli still exceeds all National and International government safety standards, including D.O.T. and is fully approved for use in all AMA sanctioned motorcycle competition events. At the same time, Ghibli includes features never before available on motorcycle helmets. Features such as flush mounted *"3-position"* face shield that eliminates whistling and wind noise. A quick-release chin strap mechanism, which enables helmet removal, even with bulky gloves on.



LEVER ACTION: Simply push the lever and the shield opens in one smooth, single hand operation.

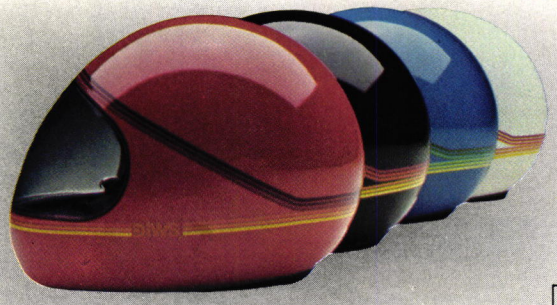


THREE POSITION SHIELD: Precision molded flip shield will lock into any of three positions.



NO WHISTLING: Outer shell is completely streamlined, eliminating wind and water leakage.

QUICK RELEASE STRAP: "Easy Action" chin strap, simpler to fasten or release than any other type of chin strap.



Colors: Monza Blue, Alpine White
Ferrari Red, Onyx Black

These GHIBLI Helmets will not be sold at this price by this company in any store. To obtain one at this price, apply in writing or by telephone to the company no later than midnight, June 30, 1985.

Each helmet carries a *full one-year warranty*. There is a limit of (2) helmets per address at these prices, but requests mailed or called in early enough (before June 15th, 1985) are permitted to order up to 4 helmets.

To apply for a new Ghibli Helmet, mail this original printed notice (or a copy) together with your name and address and *$69 for one (1) or *$65 ea. (to total $130.00) for two (2) plus only $4. for shipping and handling no matter how many helmets you request. Calif. residents add 6% sales tax. Replacement shield in tint or clear, only $9.**

Mail to:

GHIBLI HELMET PROMOTION
3857 Birch St., Dept. W-4
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Phone Orders may be called in Mon. - Fri., between 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. Western time.

NATION
1-714-547-5702

OUTSIDE CALIFORNIA
1-800-621-9183

NOTE: Payment may be made by **Visa, Mastercard, American Express** or Money Order. Personal checks require 4 weeks for bank clearance. Do not send cash.

GHIBLI SIZING CHART	
HEAD MEASURE	**HELMET SIZE**
21 3/4" to 22 1/4"	Small
22 3/8" to 23"	Medium
23 1/8" to 23 5/8"	Large
23 3/4" to 24 1/4"	X-Large

*These are promotional prices **only** and therefore are good only thru the dates and times listed above.
**Replacement shields will continue to be available from this address after conclusion of helmet promotion.
For up to date prices after June 30, 1985 write or call company direct.

CYCLE GUIDE

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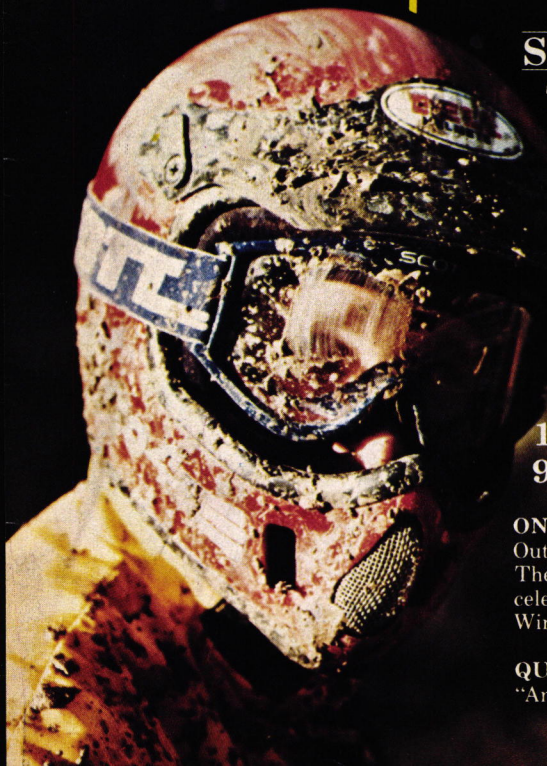


ON THE COVER:
Out of the blue of the great western sky comes Honda's Gold Wing Limited Edition. The full-boat GL mark's the bike's 10th anniversary, and serves as a rolling celebration of touring, American style. Vic Huber took the shot shortly after the Wing touched down at LAX.

QUOTE:
"Any country that went streetbike racing fell on its face."
—Pg. 81

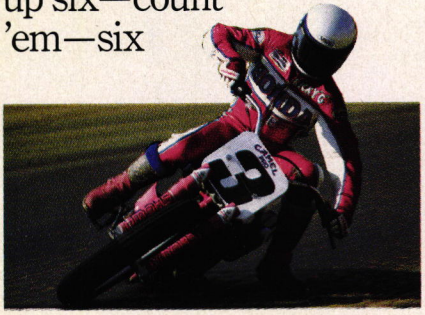
Last year we really got put in our place: first.

Number one in racing.

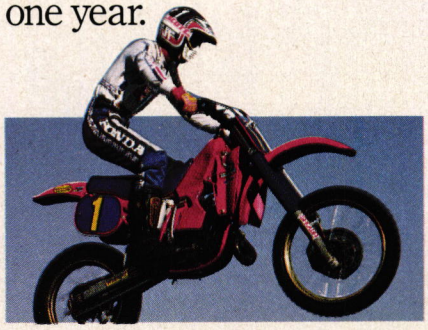
We did it by racking up six—count 'em—six National Championships.

That's more championships than any manufacturer has ever won in one year.

How did we do it? With a lot of hard work. Aggressive riding. And the most advanced, reliable motorcycle technology ever developed.



Grand National Champion, Ricky Graham



Grand National Motocross Champion, David Bailey

Formula One Champion, Mike Baldwin

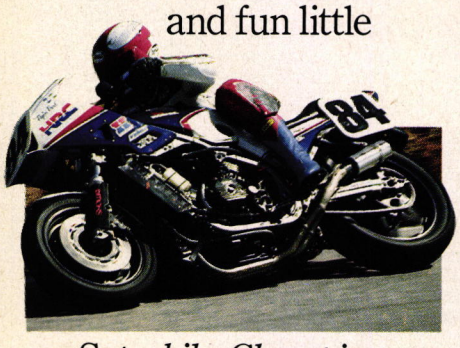
WE'VE ESTABLISHED OUR PLACE IN HISTORY.

It's called Honda technology. And you'll find it in every motorcycle we make. From our durable and fun little Z50R to our ultra high-tech race-bred VF1000R.

At Honda, we're proud to be making more than great motorcycles. We're proud to be making history.

HONDA

FOLLOW THE LEADER



Superbike Champion, Fred Merkel

500 National Champion, David Bailey

Supercross Champion, Johnny O'Mara

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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.5	228	27.2/4.25	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 510TE-'85	March '85	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.6/11.9	263	28.5/5.16	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
M-Star 250 Supercross-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.7	230	27.0/4.72	5
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki Quadrunner 250-'84	October '84	ATV	Four-stroke	1.0/N/A	384	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.4	190	29.5/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha XT250-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.7/7.9	266	28.3/4.60	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	October '84	2C/G	979.9	13.425/95.84	111	506	45–57	163
BMW K100RS-'84	October '84	4I/G	987.2	12.381/109.48	133	532	39–54	139
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda Gold Wing Ltd Ed.-'85	March '85	4C/G	1181.9	13.346/98.36	113	810	37–45	134
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	October '84	90 deg. 4D/F	698.9	12.323/106.50	124	512	37–48	136
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda VF700S Sabre-'85	January '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.358/109.09	121	514	28–48	136
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Honda V65 Magna-'85	February '85	90 deg. 4D/G	1098.0	11.440/118.42	142	566	34–46	133
Kawasaki GPz550-'85	March '85	4A/F	553.8	12.478/104.89	121	432	44–54	137
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'85	March '85	4A/F	592.6	12.124/109.09	135	448	40–48	135
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37–47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24–48	120
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS550ES-'84	July '84	4A/F	572.3	12.675/103.68	123	444	30–51	135
Suzuki GS700E-'85	January '85	4A/F	699.5	11.978/112.21	125	485	27–53	140
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	October '84	4A/F	1135.4	11.268/122.44	148	542	26–51	122
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	Nov./Dec. '84	82 deg. 4D/G	698.5	13.307/102.15	111	546	23–45	143
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha RZ500-'84	September '84	4D/F††	499.7	12.053/112.64	136	439	25–37	N/A
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	June '84	4A/F	1097.6	10.992/124.48	146	535	27–46	121
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive, **I**-Horizontal Longitudinal

† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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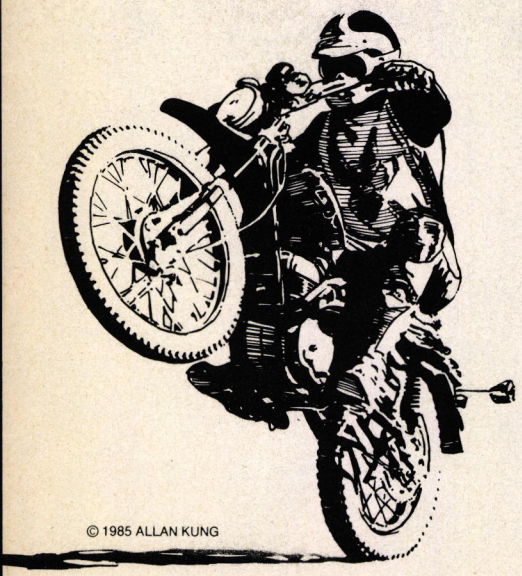

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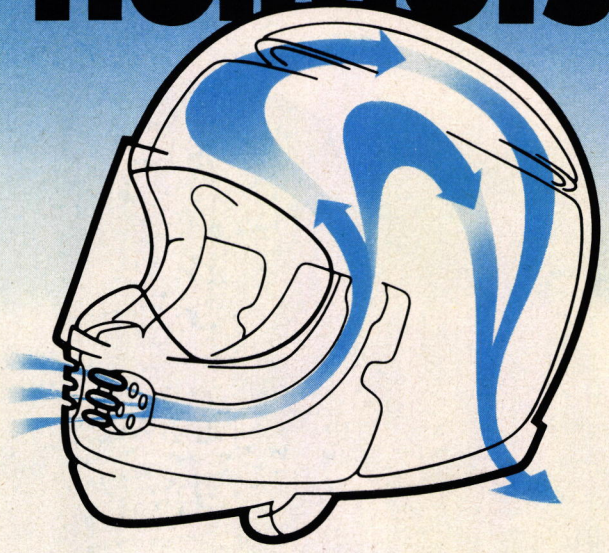
Let's clear the air on ventilated helmets.



Arai did it first. Arai does it best.

You're going to read a lot of talk from helmet companies about fully ventilated helmets. They'll probably make it sound like they've discovered the greatest advance in helmet comfort since padding.

Well, they're half right. Full ventilation *is* the greatest advance in helmet comfort since padding. But *they* didn't discover it.

Arai introduced fully ventilated Motocross helmets in 1983.

And last year Arai was selling the first fully ventilated full-face Street helmet: the Snell/D.O.T. approved "Super Vent".

Super Vent not only channels cooling air to your face, but throughout the entire helmet, while a special new liner fabric actually "wicks" moisture away from your head and into the airflow, keeping you cool, dry and comfortable.

So if you're looking for the best fully ventilated helmet, think of Arai *first.*

Arai HELMET®

HEAD AND VISOR ABOVE THE REST

Ampersand International Dept. CG
P.O. Box 421
Tenafly, NJ 07670

BMW'S ALTERNATIVES TO THE

There was a time when the term 'full-fairing touring motorcycle' meant just that. A motorcycle with a full fairing and, most likely, saddlebags.

Then along came the so-called luxury cruisers, a.k.a. "land yachts." Tourers seemingly designed more for rolling than riding. With seats reminiscent of hotel bar stools. And gross weights more easily expressed in fractions of tons than numbers of pounds.

All of which may have inspired you to wonder, along with this writer from Rider magazine, whether "with all the razz-matazz about CB radios and automatic air suspensions on the latest glitzy tourers, the real function of a touring bike...has often been overlooked."

Happily, as you can see here, the answer is not entirely.

Both of BMW's full-fairing tourers, the K100 RT and the R80 RT, are among the lightest in their respective classes. The R80

*Limited warranty protects against defects in workmanship and materials for three years and for an unlimited number of miles. It applies to motorcycles purchased from authorized U.S. dealers and BMW European Delivery only and is transferable within the period specified. See your dealer for details. Winnebago is a registered trademark of Winnebago Industries, Inc. © 1985 BMW of North America, Inc. The BMW trademark and logo are registered.

TWO-WHEELED WINNEBAGO.

weighing in at 455 pounds. And the K100 at 505 pounds. Or, as Cycle World put it, "about the same as a sporting 750."

And what weight there is, is positioned precisely where riders want it. Down low. For improved handling and stability. Or, to put it another way, easier riding.

Both bikes also deliver their power with an extremely broad torque curve. Via the K-bike's much-acclaimed 4-cylinder Compact Drive System™ or the R80's time-honored horizontally-opposed twin. And both come with fully integrated fairings and saddlebags.

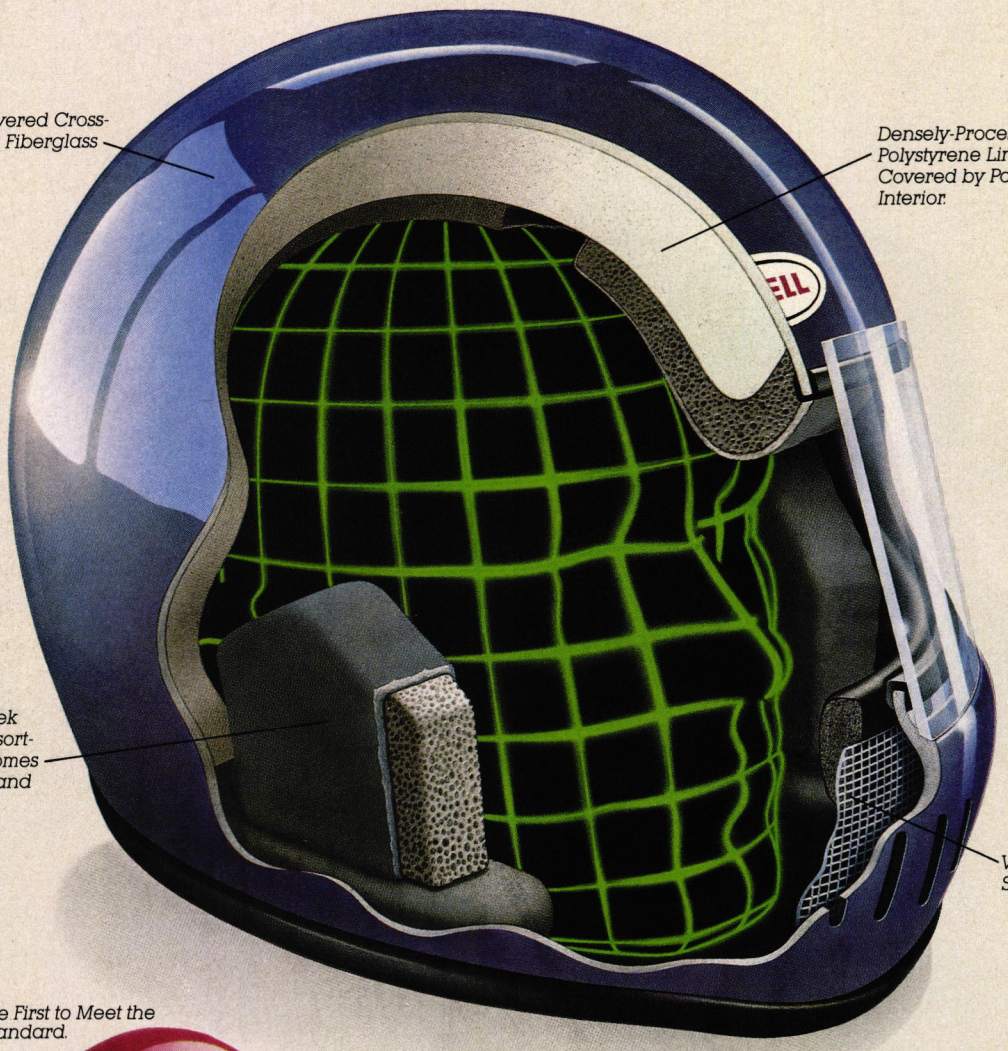
What's more, BMW's RT's are not only designed for the long run, they're engineered for it. With engine designs that are easier to service. Fewer moving parts, so there are fewer things to go wrong.

Monolever™ rear suspensions, which make changing the rear tire as easy as changing a car tire. And BMW's renowned 3-year warranty.*

Still, even with their commodious saddlebags, BMW's tourers won't haul as much gear as some of their gargantuan rivals. But then, BMW riders have always preferred a different sort of hauling.

THE LEGENDARY MOTORCYCLES OF GERMANY.

If you think all helmets are alike, you ought to have your head examined.


Multi-Layered Cross-Hatched Fiberglass Shell.
Densely-Processed Polystyrene Liner Covered by Padded Interior.
Adjustable Cheek Pad System. (Assortment of Pads Comes with Star LTD II and Tourstar II.)
Vented Wire-Mesh Screening.

Bell Helmets. The First to Meet the New Snell 85 Standard.

Helmet styles and designs come and go, but one thing stays the same. Human anatomy. To build safer and better fitting helmets is to better understand human anatomy. And that's exactly what Bell did with the Star LTD II.

We took a new look at your eyes.

We started by improving the optical quality of our Lexan face shield, by improving quality control. Our shields are put in front of a lens analyzer grid and tested for maximum clarity. And with the patented Bell Kam Lok system, lifting the shield is as natural as blinking your eyes. A single touch with one hand and the visor flips up.

We took a new look at your cheek bones.

When it comes to fit, head size is not the whole story. That's why we invented our Adjustable Cheek Pad System (patent pending). What it does is allow each rider to create his own fit by inserting pads into the helmet lining.

We took an old look at your wallet.

Despite all these new features (and newly designed graphics) we also held onto some great features from last year. Like our specially designed neck roll that gives us some of the quietest helmets on the road. And last, but not least, we took an old look at a Bell tradition—value for your dollar.

So when you buy a new helmet, make sure it's a new Star from Bell. We've been making great helmets for 30 years not by sitting around scratching our heads. But by continually re-examining them.

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Thompson at Large

Snowblind

The saddle's no place for a blind man.

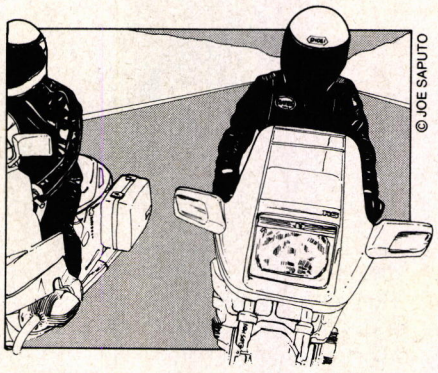
• Let's say you're not content to sit through another winter, brooding over your unridden motorcycle and staring out the window at the gray nastiness. Let's say you've spent too many winters doing just that. Then let's say you were slushing along in your car the other day, peering through your wipers at the grimy sleet, playing dodge-'em with the people in those slaloming Plymouths whose inevitable reaction to anything on the street is to lock-and-load (lock the brakes and wait for the load to impact), when you see, as if in some kind of crazy dream, a loon on a motorcycle. Out there! In the cold! With the Lock-n-Loaders! In the snow!

You will survive the sighting. You will make it home, but it will gnaw at you. What was that guy *doing* out in the white madness? He appeared from the white-out wake behind a Plymouth, his Gold Wing Interstate looking like an attack sub shadowing a wallowing merchantman. Zipped into his plasto-suit from head to toe, and plugged into his cigarette lighter, he passed before you were able to see his surely crazed face behind the faceshield.

You will shake your head in disbelief at first, swearing the guy had to be a certifiable lunatic, a write-off, to be skating through the white muck. I mean, you'll say to yourself, it's *cold* out there. Numb-lipped, frostbitten-fingers, no-fun cold. And then you'll realize just how crazy he really was, because of the possibility of slides. The lack of traction. The slow-motion arc from vertical to horizontal, watching the treasured hardware spark and grind flip-flop style under the snow-buried wheels of parked cars beside the invisible road. You'll shudder, recalling Kurtz's words from the deepest heart of darkness: "The horror! The horror!"

But eventually, you'll begin to wonder less about why he appeared, and more about how. That is inevitable in motorcycling. Most of us are incurable kinesthetic junkies, so where one guy has put his tracks, inevitably some of us follow. You might not be so silly as to follow that guy in his electric plasto-suit and his Interstate, however. You might be able to ignore the nagging curiosity about what it's like Out There.

I wasn't. One day I more or less deliberately ignored the weatherman's vague warnings about snow flurries, and headed out for my daily 84-mile round trip to work—but not in my Saab Turbo Winter Combat Command Car (with snow tires so aggressive each one is a registered weapon). Instead, I took my Beemer. In the morning, the sky was low and gray and menacing. At noon, the sky was low and gray and more menacing. By the time the ledger slammed shut on the day, the sky was white. The ground was white. The BMW was white.



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I studied it all through my second-story window with an odd sort of detachment. The device that was supposed to carry me home sat almost alone in a huge parking lot under 6 inches of snow. I had to ride my Beemer home, or I simply wouldn't *get* home.

Luckily, the telephone was working. I called people I knew who'd lived with snow all their lives, and with bikes almost as long. Most thought I was nuts even to contemplate riding 42 miles home, at night, in the heaviest snowstorm the Eastern seaboard had endured on this date in a century. A few did give me tips, though, after they'd finished chuckling.

Still, there weren't many tips to be had. And what there were amounted to: Lower the tire pressures; avoid sudden movements; stay away from cars, ruts, ice of all varieties and snow of unknown depth; stay warm. No matter what, they all agreed, stay warm. Falling down can hurt, but hypothermia kills.

I walked stiffly into the snowfall in my own plasto-suit, and marveled at the quiet and beauty of it all. I brushed snow off the Beemer, rocked it down off its absurd centerstand and found out immediately about lousy traction as it tried to fall over at zero mph. Oh boy, I thought. Is this ever going to be fun. I started it up, listening to the boxer's drone echoing off the snow blanket, and, legs down like outriggers, slowly eased out the clutch.

The first few miles were awful. I imagined the BMW slewing out from under me at every turn, the front wheel catching some unseen rut and spitting me into snowy oblivion. But slowly I relaxed, and felt the Beemer respond like some bloated enduro bike. While I was alone on the road, I felt better and better. Then I hit the traffic on the swirling snow of the Interstate.

Riding behind the cars was almost impossible. They bunched together like so many charging, drunken rhinos, their drivers obeying some primal drive to huddle for safety even though what they were doing was precisely wrong for the conditions. The only solution was to pass them. But it wasn't easy, physically or mentally, to twist up the BMW's wick that night. I knew that if I fell, it would be all over. None of them—not the Buicks or the Hondas or the massive dump truck that led the lurching pack—would be able to stop or avoid me. I gassed it anyway.

And I lived. But gassing it was the wrong thing to do. The bike weaved and wobbled on the ragged edge of traction. I sawed away desparately at the stubby handlebar, yet it was physics that was in control then, not me, and sheer vector-luck kept me going. An hour later, soaked with perspiration, bone-weary and walleyed, I slid to a halt in front of my own garage door. I keyed the door opener, and while the sections clanked up along their tracks, I stared into the inviting garage with a new appreciation of its inner beauty.

As you might expect, I swore off riding in the snow for the rest of the season. But moto-madness doesn't let go that easily. As the long, dreary months dragged on, I found myself wondering: What if a guy got the right training? What if he had the right equipment? Could he make it through the whole winter on a bike? Of course! All over the Snow Belt, people ride every day! . . .

I caught myself just in time, and took up cross-country skiing. It's a lot slower, but I laugh when I fall.

—*Steve Thompson*

Setting It Right

Sermon On The Mount

Progress as a point of view.

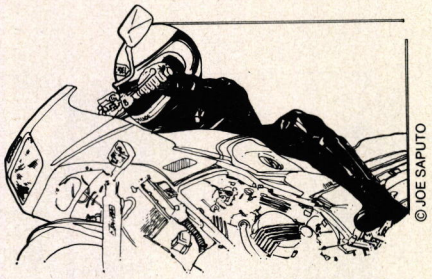
• The disappointing thing about Mt. Everest is that, although it is undeniably a high mountain, it is not really a tall one. Impressive it is; outstanding it is not, being surrounded by so many others that reach almost equally high. Makalu, Lhotse and the two Kanchen peaks climb to within 95 percent of Everest's supreme altitude, and there are 14 others in the range that exceed 90 percent of it. You can go for more than 300 miles without ever setting foot on ground less than half as high as Everest, and the whole range averages about 70 percent of Everest's height.

In the same fashion, the disappointing thing about the fastest, quickest, or even the best of current production motorcycles is that, like Everest, they do not exceed their neighbors by a significant margin. Kawasaki's Ninja, for instance, can do an indicated 156 mph, or some such speed, and is very different from the surprisingly large number of other bikes that will exceed 150; the figure alone tells us very little about the machine.

Times tell us much more than figures. Not the popular banalities of the dragstrip, where differences between machines have to be measured in centiseconds, while differences between riders are apparent in seconds. Even years are not long enough to be informative; but decades begin to tell.

I recently rode a Ninja for the first time, having missed its launch while I was enjoying the splendid isolation of Texas. The very next thing I rode, while the sensations imparted by the Kawasaki were still fresh in my mind, was a 1925 Sunbeam. How often can one see motorcycles in that sort of perspective?

What heightened the perspective for me was that I had not ridden a vintage motorcycle for more than 30 years, not since I plonked daily to work on a 1921 Triumph that was then little more than 30 years old. The era of vintage bikes—long, low, light, side-valve singles epitomized by the Sunbeam—effectively ended in 1925; with the trend to overhead valves came taller machines with big, bulbous saddle tanks, and higher performance demanding a sturdier (i.e., heavier) build. That old side-valve Sunbeam could be called the last of the vintage bikes, a distinction lent emphasis by its direct derivation from the version



© JOE SAPUTO

Alec Bennett rode to first place in the 1922 Senior TT race at the Isle of Man. That was the last time a side-valver won at the Isle of Man. As for the Ninja, which dominated the largest-capacity Production TT this year, it is Kawasaki's first really modern motorcycle. In the idiom currently used by the industry to express modernity, the Ninja fits as neatly as any of the others in production, so it is as representative of its kind as the Sunbeam was. Accordingly, contrasting the two is not unfair.

The contrasts between them are obvious. The Sunbeam is skinny, and the majority of its few and simple parts are apparent and intelligible; the Kawasaki is fat, and most of its many complexities are no more easily seen than they are understood. The Ninja engine alone weighs more than the entire 'Beam, and for the price of twice as many gears, four times as many cylinders, eight times as many valves and 12 times as many sparks per minute, the Ninja propels its rider three times as fast.

In doing that speed, the Ninja produced a bit of a tingle, though not enough for me to fear its consequences. I know, it has a balancer shaft that is supposed to cancel the secondary vibrations that are as natural to an inline-four as primary imbalance is to a single; but a single balancer shaft is not enough. As Mitsubishi demonstrated years ago, an inline-four needs two such shafts, and they must be in the right places—a fact reluctantly recognized by Porsche designers, who had to cudgel their brains quite hard before finding a way around Mitsubishi patents when designing the 944 engine.

It made me sad that Porsche should want to make an inline-four after demonstrating for years the innate superiority of horizontally opposed cylinders. BMW has done the same with its new K100, in which the tingle really is annoying: Secondaries shake an inline-four in the plane of its cylinders, and as the BMW engine lies on its side, it vibrates the chassis horizontally. A conventional upright-four shakes vertically, which can be damped better by the natural flex of the tires, suspension and chassis.

Despite that natural flex, the Sunbeam shook. Perhaps I could have squeezed more than 52 mph out of it, but the numbing vibration from that one-lung engine persuaded me that the attempt would be unwise. In the first place (in my hands, that is, where I felt the discomfort most strongly), I feared the onset of the dreaded whitefinger, that mortifying malady of navvies working with roadbreakers' drills. In the second place, the machine was not mine to break; it belonged to Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, and is usually on show in the National Motor Museum. And so 52 mph it was, and at that speed the vibration kept closing the air lever, so I had to wedge my thumb between it and the throttle lever to keep them open and the mixture healthy.

If you have never encountered carburetor levers, feel no regrets; they were awful. Gottlieb Daimler's original motorcycle of 1885 had a twistgrip, but few European makers shared the Americans' sensible predilection for them until a few years after the 'Beam was built. When Alec Bennett raced, he had a throttle trigger—a short-stroke quick-action lever which would have provided excellent training for double-action revolver shooting, and which definitely gave him an advantage when emerging from a slow corner. Even today, it might be an intriguing alternative to those slow twistgrips that require a second handful to get full noise.

I can think of no other vintage components that I should like to see revived. However, if anyone were to offer a new bike that was long, low and really light, I might be very interested. Admittedly, the Sunbeam was created when motorcycling was an entirely different activity from what it has become, but I was surprised to be reminded how nicely such a machine could steer and ride, how well it could dive into a corner and how smoothly it could gloss over the asperities of an old Hampshire country lane despite skinny tires, very little suspension in front and none at all behind. Never mind those mountains; the molehills matter more.—*L.J.K. Setright*

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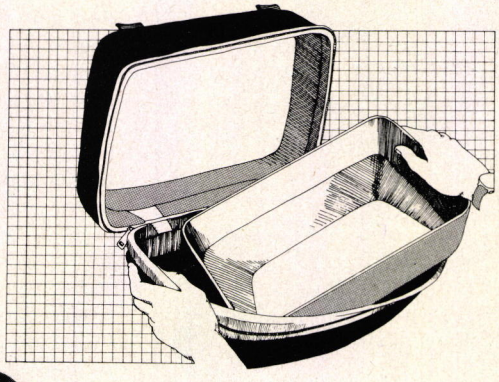

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Motomart

Behold these buys of March.

Interceptor Imagery: VF500F Interceptor owners now can have the fully faired Euro-look, with a Targa Formula Cowling. The fiberglass cowling is finished in white with blue and red stripes, and Targa claims the piece weighs less than 5 pounds and does not affect engine cooling. The cowling is priced at $269.95, and is available through motorcycle dealers or from Targa, Dept. CG, 10 McLaren Suite B, Irvine, California 92714.

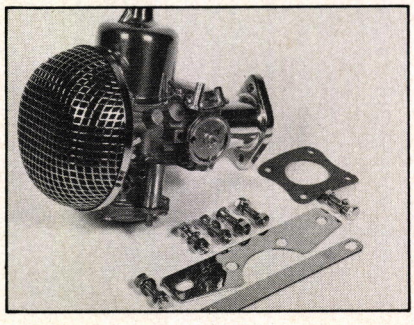
Rear-End Loader: How many boards does it take to load an ATV into your pickup? That's a question you'll never have to ask again if you have Versa-Ramp's folding loading ramp. According to V-R, the Versa-Ramp can handle up to 790 pounds, folds up to 16.25-by-48 inches, and can be detached from its mounts by removing two pins. The maker also says the ramp can be easily installed on any tailgate surface, and has a suggested retail price of $250.00. For more details, write to Versa-Ramp, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 6022, Jonesboro, Arkansas, 72403.

Bar None: If you can't find handlebars bent to suit your tastes, consider Weigl's adjustable handlebars for sportbikes. These multi-piece units can be rotated, raised, or lowered to taste. The Weigl bars come with internal weights for vibration control, and are available for most sportbikes. Black-and-chrome bars retail for $69.95, while gold-and-black-chrome models go for $77.50 For more information, see your motorcycle dealer or write to The Weigl Co., Dept. CG, 1461 Arundell Ave., Ventura, California 93003.

Backpack for Bikes: Pack up your troubles—or anything else you've a mind to—in Rev-Pack's Bar Pack. Rev-Pack says the bag is designed specifically to attach to motorcycle sissy bars and backrests, and has a carrying capacity of 1650 cubic inches. Further, R-P claims the bag is waterproof, thanks to a layer of vinyl laminated to the inside of the Bar Pack's black Cordura nylon exterior. The Pack retails for $29.95, plus $2 shipping, from Rev Pack, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 175, New Cuyama, California 93254.

Long-Distance Leather: You might already know Tour Rider for its line of nylon touring suits. But now Tour Rider wants you to know about its leather garments for the motorcyclist. The firm's sport-style jacket has handwarmer pockets, a collar that can be worn zipped up or folded down, an elasticized waist, and a spandex insert under the arm for a pleasing fit. Tour Rider leathers are available in black, burgundy, or silver, for a suggested retail price of $99.95. To learn more, see your motorcycle dealer or write to Tour Rider, Dept. CG, 925 Turnbull Drive, P.O. Box 2826, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83403.

Carburetor Evolution: Hop-up your Harley with an SU carburetor kit from Rivera Engineering. Made for H-D's Evolution engine, the kit includes a manifold adapter, brackets to mount the carb, and a spacer block to allow use of the carb with any H-D gas tank. Also included are the necessary hardware, gaskets, extra needles and mounting and tuning instructions, as well as a new push-pull throttle assembly. The kit is claimed to accept all fittings required for California use, and retails for $239.00. For more information, contact Rivera Engineering, Dept. CG, 6416 South Western Ave., Whittier, California 90606.



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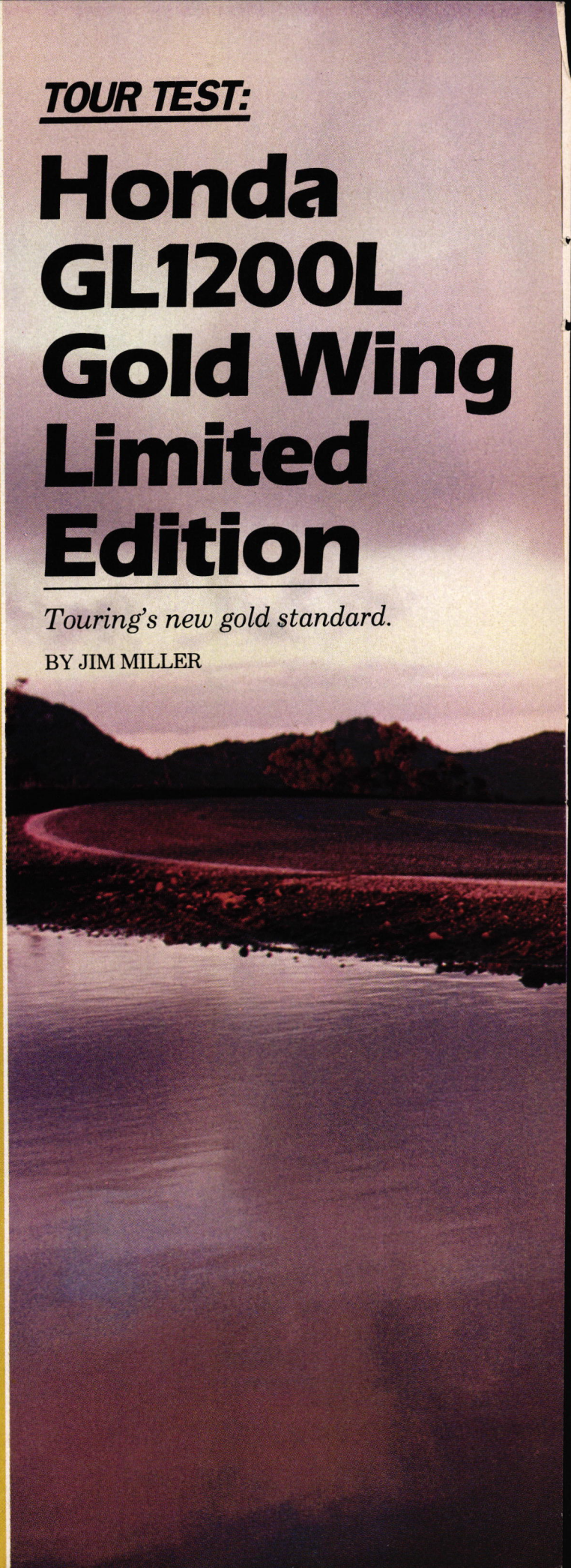
TOUR TEST:

Honda GL1200L Gold Wing Limited Edition

Touring's new gold standard.

BY JIM MILLER



It's been 10 long years since Honda introduced the GL1000 Gold Wing, and in the process completely rewrote the book on American touring. During that time, the Wing has gone through two displacement increases, two major redesigns and a myriad of refinements, but, more important, the GL shifted from a bare-bones, equip-it-yourself touring bike to an industry-standard full-dress, turn-key luxury liner. In the bargain, though, the Gold Wing provided a moving target for all the other Japanese manufacturers, and each one has since drawn a bead and loosed a salvo of its own, producing full-on touring bikes designed to blow Honda's flagship out of the water and capitalize on it's success.

Yet, so far, none of the other big-rig tourers has been able to displace the GL as *the* king of heavyweight touring, even though some, like Yamaha's Venture Royale, have bettered the Wing in certain areas. But more often than not, the latest GL's nearest competitor has been the previous year's Wing. And that seems to be the case again this year, too, because in celebration of the GL's 10th anniversary, Honda has tweaked last year's all-new Aspencade and produced the most opulent, feature-laden Gold Wing yet, the 1985 Limited Edition. The top-of-the-line Gold Wing retains the Aspencade's basic engine and chassis specifications, yet also sports computerized fuel injection, a trip computer, cruise-control, auto-leveling rear suspension, turnsignal-actuated cornering lights, four-speaker stereo and a number of other refinements not found on any other GL, including the '85 Aspencade.

Significantly, several of those features *were* found on the Aspencade's long-distance rivals in '84. Kawasaki's Voyager bristled with fuel injection and a trip computer, and Yamaha endowed its Venture Royale with cruise-control and a computerized air-suspension system. While those components weren't enough to topple the Honda from the top of the touring heap, they did make some GL owners feel shortchanged after a preflight check of the Aspencade's cockpit.

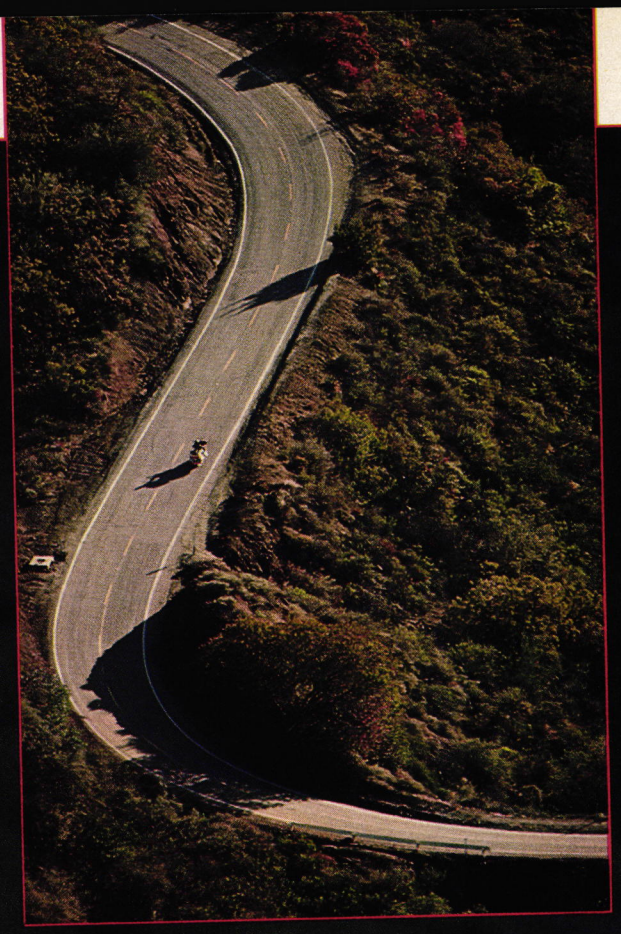
There's no such danger of that happening after a tour of the Limited Edition's pilot's seat, however; Honda has made the LE a showcase for computer-age full-boat touring. A total of four on-board computers monitor everything from instantaneous fuel consumption to rear-suspension setting on the GL1200L. In terms of features, at least, this latest Wing constitutes a fresh, new target for the other manufacturers to aim for.

And foremost among those features is the LE's computerized fuel injection. Honda claims the CFI's major advantage is its ability to provide accurate fuel-metering in extreme conditions, such as cold weather or high altitude, and the system's performance bears out those claims. Even when the temperature drops into the teens, the GL starts immediately and warms up quickly, with no hesitation or stumbling, and provides excellent throttle response. The Limited Edition also manages better than 40 mpg at touring speeds, though its range isn't noticeably better than that of last year's Aspencade.

It's much easier to keep track of fuel economy on the LE than with the Aspencade, though; all it takes is a touch of a button. The Limited Edition's trip computer tracks average and instantaneous fuel economy, fuel consumed, fuel remaining, miles traveled, elapsed time, average speed and several other items to keep the worrisome traveler informed or the wearisome traveler entertained. And, unlike the unit on Kawasaki's 1984 Voyager, the GL's trip computer is accurate enough to be useful. Plus, in addition to fuel consumption, the computer also predicts the bike's range, based on average fuel consumption and the fuel remaining in the tank, which provides a handy way to plan for gas stops.

Continued

HONDA



And to simplify your tasks between stops, Honda equipped this high-roller's Wing with an electronic cruise-control. Three buttons mounted in a pod above the right handgrip control the system: an on/off switch, a set/decel button and a resume/accel button. Once the unit is on, touching the set/decel control sets the speed. The bike's speed also can be adjusted in 1-mph increments by way of the set/decel (lower speed) or resume/accel (higher speed) buttons. Operating the appropriate control causes the bike to accelerate or decelerate as long as the button is pushed.

But the best thing about the fingertip throttle control system is that it works superbly. Once you've set the cruise-control, the GL's speed rarely varies more than 1 mph. Working any of the controls—brakes, clutch or shifter, or rolling off the throttle—will cancel the cruise-control, but the set figure stays in memory, so touching the resume/accel control will bring the bike back up to speed. Other operations, such as turning off the ignition, will require resetting the speed. Honda built in a total of 17 different ways to cancel the cruise-control, and as additional safeguards, the system works only if the bike is in fourth or fifth gear, and only between 30 mph and 80 mph.

It's unfortunate, too, that the system won't work at more than 80 mph, because the Limited Edition's flat-four motor feels right at home at those speeds. The 1182cc engine is extremely smooth at big-ticket velocities, with enough power on tap for comfortable high-speed cruising. In part to improve acceleration over previous Wings, Honda lowered (raised numerically) the secondary gearing, and raised the transmission ratios for fifth and first gears on all '85 GLs. But the major reason for the gearing change, oddly enough, is better fuel mileage. Honda found that many GL owners were unwilling to downshift in passing situations, and fuel economy plummeted during top-gear passes. The '85 GL-LE shows the benefits of that change, at least in terms of passing ability; the bike moves out quickly in fifth gear, though a fast pass still requires a downshift to fourth, particularly on an uphill grade. And despite the lower overall gearing, the GL's engine still turns less than 3000 rpm in top gear at legal freeway speeds, and at 80 the motor is spinning at slightly more than 4000 rpm.

In addition, the Gold Wing is exceptionally stable at that speed. As a sightseer's platform, the Limited Edition is the next best thing to a tour bus, able to hold a steady line even in a strong cross-

wind, or in the face of buffeting from a passing semi. Little of that buffeting reaches the rider, too, because the GL's fairing effectively shields the cockpit. A small stream of air slips between the windshield extensions and the mirrors at high speed, but it's not enough to cause any irritation. In fact, it's only when the GL approaches its 113-mph top speed that it begins to lose its poise, and starts to take on a somewhat loose, vague feel. Below that point, however, the GL feels as much at home on the Interstate as a Peterbilt.

As admirably suited as the LE is to the semi's domain, it's certainly not limited to four-lane travel. The light-feeling steering, a result of last year's chassis redesign and the switch to a 16-inch front wheel, makes the big Wing a delight on twisty roads or urban boulevards. Even in quick side-to-side transitions, the LE belies its 810-pound weight, and handles heavy traffic or tight turns with equal finesse. There's no forgetting the Limited Edition is a heavyweight tourer, but on a snaking mountain road, or in inner-city traffic, you're reminded of that more by the expanse of plexiglass you're peering through than by the bike's handling.

You certainly won't be reminded of the LE's touring intent by its braking ability, because its stopping power is on par with some sportbikes: Hauling the GL down from 60 mph took only 134 feet. And its braking performance isn't limited only to panic stops, either; despite a slightly spongy feel at the brake pedal, the LE's brakes are easy to modulate, even on wet, snowy roads. As with all Wings since 1983, the Limited Edition uses Honda's unified braking system, which operates the rear and right-front disc brakes through the brake pedal. Sponginess aside, the only time the system's function intrudes is when the front brake is used alone; it demands a firm squeeze at the lever, even during low-speed stops. Hard stops still require using both the pedal and the brake lever.

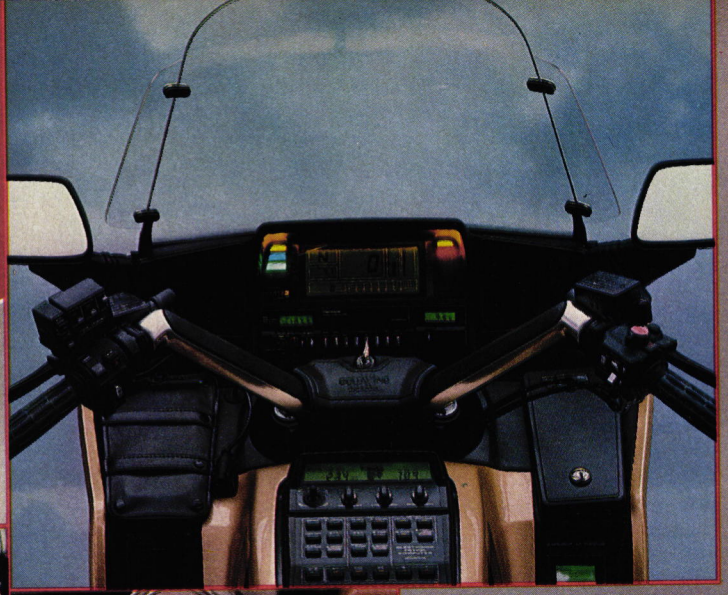
Hard stops also underscore the mar-

Continued

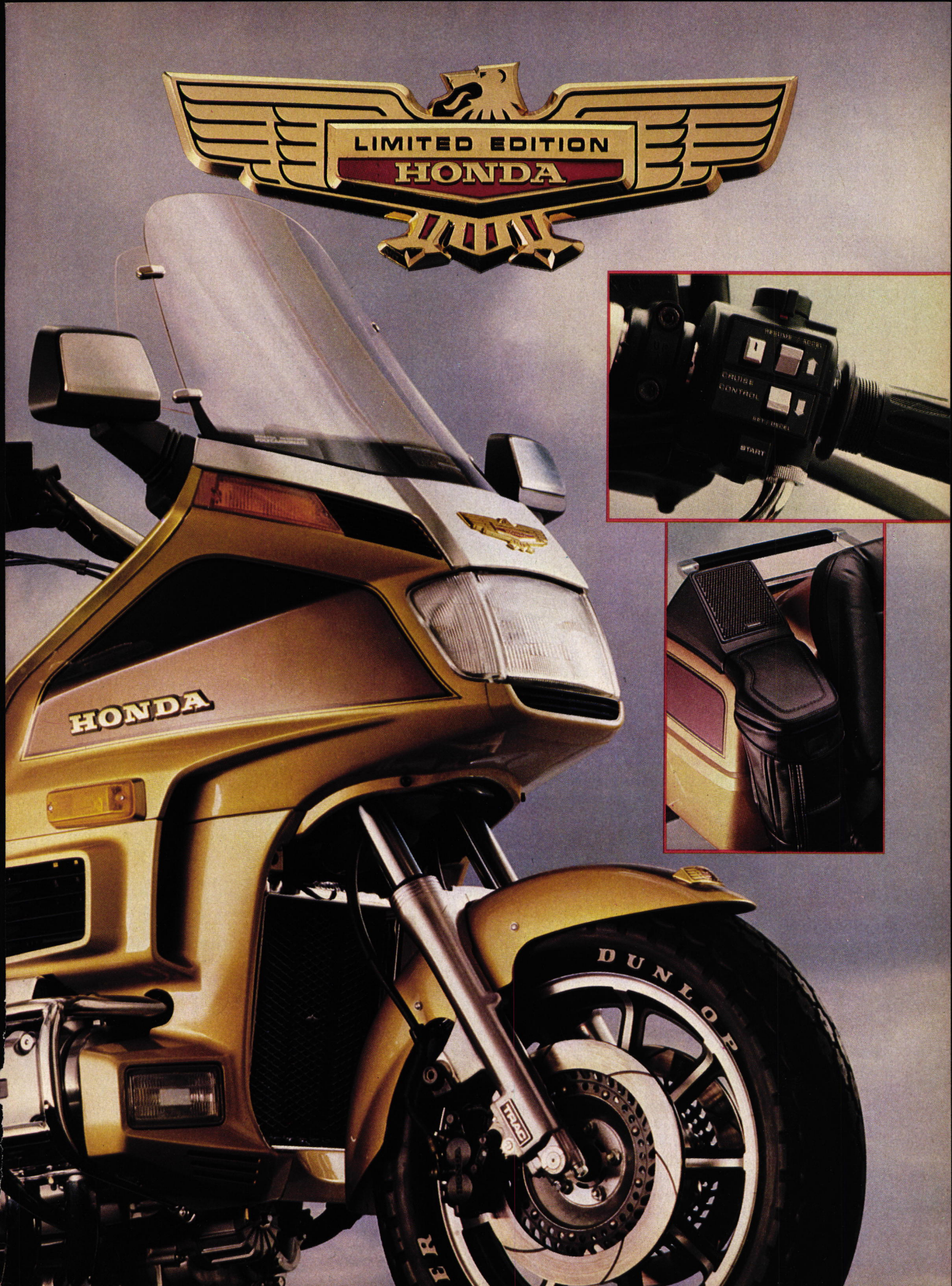
COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Honda GL1200L Limited Edition-'85	13.346/98.36	113	810	134
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	13.156/98.14	118	744	141
Harley-Davidson FLTC-'84	14.603/88.75	107	774	152
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	13.346/97.61	116	882	142
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	12.759/101.46	124	752	137
Harley-Davidson FXRT-'85	14.180/90.36	92	640	126

GOLDWING



Honda's 10th anniversary Wing bristles with features from cornering lights to travel trunk. Included in the Limited Edition package are CFI, cruise-control and rear-mounted speakers. Those touches help make the GL the *ne plus ultra* of turn-key tourers.


LIMITED EDITION
HONDA
HONDA
CRUISE CONTROL
START
DUNLOP

ginal effectiveness of the Honda's anti-dive system. The Gold Wing has TRAC anti-dive units on both fork legs, but even at their maximum setting (4), the system allows the bike to nose-dive noticeably during aggressive braking, particularly with front-suspension air pressure set on the low side of its 0-14 psi range. Increasing the pressure reduces dive somewhat, but, with more than 10 psi in the fork, its action becomes harsh and intrudes on the GL's plush ride.

In fact, for a solo rider, the bike rides best with both front and rear suspension settings on the low side. Pumping the rear suspension up to the high end of its 28-92-psi range stiffens the ride enough to impinge on comfort. With 50 psi or more in the rear shocks, the rear wheel patters over expansion joints, setting up a rhythmic tattoo that's faintly telegraphed through the GL's seat. Drop the pressures back to 4 psi in the fork and 40 psi in the shocks, though, and paving irregularities and expansion joints simply disappear under the Wing's tires.

And it's a simple matter to change the suspension pressure on the Limited Edition. An on-board air compressor feeds the suspension system, and is controlled by a set of switches above the left handgrip. Although Honda recommends setting the air pressures with the bike on its centerstand, both ends can be changed with the touch of a button while the bike is on the road. In addition, the GL-LE's system features an auto-leveling function for the rear suspension; it compensates for the bike's load by adjusting the air pressure in the shocks. The system consists of a computer, and a microprocessor connected to the swingarm though a linkage. When the auto-leveling feature is actuated, the computer changes the air pressure in the shocks until the rear suspension is at a predetermined ride height. You can, however, manually override the system, and that's fortunate. The auto-leveling feature raises the pressure to the point where the ride becomes slightly harsh, though not annoyingly so.

But any harshness in the Gold Wing's makeup is strictly a relative affair, because the Limited Edition coddles you with comfort that will keep you in the saddle long after other riders have checked into a motel. That comfort starts with the LE's saddle, too, because its thick padding and roomy dimensions provide the best long-term seating this side of a La-Z-Boy. And like its living room counterpart, the GL's seat is adjustable; a latch on the left side allows you to move the seat fore and aft to any of three positions within a 1.5-inch range. So you can just sit back, enjoy the scenery and listen to the Limited Edition's excellent four-speaker AM/FM-cassette stereo system.

That kind of living room comfort is typical of the Limited Edition, though, because everything about it exudes the feeling that this is a *long-distance* touring bike. And as a touring package, it's as complete and well thought out as you'll find. The fairing and luggage include subtle touches that illustrate Honda's attention to detail in the things that can make or break a tourer over the long haul. The trunk and saddlebag liners, for example, are slightly smaller than their hard-luggage counterparts, so each liner can be stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey and still fit into the bags. And the fairing features several cubbyholes for those small items you inevitably forget to pack the night before. The LE's clock even includes a display that allows you, at the push of a button, to adjust the clock for six different North American time zones.

It's precisely those kinds of features, the functional, well-considered, seemingly minor pieces, that help the Limited Edition set new standards for fully equipped touring machines—and that set it that much further apart from its competition. But even more important are the standards set by the entire GL series: a combination of handling, stability, comfort, smoothness and performance that's the result of a decade of refinement. Because while the other manufacturers have been struggling to best the Gold Wing, Honda has made good use of the time to make the Gold Wing *the best.* ●

Nits:

- Radio/tape-deck controls are too small, and are difficult to work with heavy gloves.
- Scan feature on radio works too quickly, making fine-tuning difficult.
- Trip computer eliminates storage area under cowling, and inhibits use of a tankbag.

Picks:

- Fairing includes a storage bin for cassettes.
- High-quality toolkit is exceptionally complete, and includes a ratchet and socket set.
- Windshield height is adjustable within a 1-inch range.
- Travel trunk includes a courtesy lamp that lights when the lid is opened.
- Air compressor includes a 6-foot-long air hose.

Ride Review

• It took me a while to figure out the Limited Edition's gadgetry. But once I deciphered the bike's mobile entertainment center, I gained a better understanding of my own personal perspective on touring: Long-distance travel is more than just spending all day in the saddle worrying about butt blisters, or coping with a bike that's loaded to the gunwales. Instead, it has to do with keeping my mind occupied with the on-board data: Knowing my ETA and mpg, for instance, as I sail along.

But for $10,000, Honda should include one more gadget, an FPM (fun per miles) meter. Because for Superslab sailing, there is *nothing* more fun than crewing aboard this moto-yacht. Anything less is strictly second class. So when it's time to weigh anchor, book me aboard the S.S. Limited Edition. Port out, starboard home. *—Dain Gingerelli*

• I never thought I'd say it, but. . .I don't have much use for Honda's Limited Edition Gold Wing.

Oh, it has nothing to do with the basic package; Honda has spent a decade refining that to near perfection, leaving precious little to dislike. No, my distaste for the Limited Edition stems from the pieces that vault its price to $2102 past that of the Aspencade. And—for me, anyway—the hardware you get for that princely sum doesn't provide an equal amount of goodness for the long haul. The only worthwhile addition is the cruise-control, and there are plenty of those available from the aftermarket.

So you can wheel an '85 Aspencade right over here, please. I'll just ride it straight to an accessory shop and buy a cruise-control. After that, I'll go to the *bank.* *—Charles Everitt*

• How many motorcycles can you say are *never* boring? I didn't think I could say that about any bike until I rode the Limited Edition. No matter how long the road, there's always one more feature to entertain me.

What's really amazing about the Limited, though, is not its electronic amusement park, but its utter defiance of the laws of physics. Despite appearing to have all the deftness (and weight) of an spray-painted elephant wearing a chrome tutu, the Gold Wing can dance around curvy roads with the agility and grace of motorcycles half its size. And what I enjoy doing *most* on this motorcycle is schussing down my favorite backroad, picking off unsuspecting sportbikes with "Ride of the Valkyries" booming from all four speakers. Now *that's* entertainment. *—Paul Van Zuyle*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda Gold Wing Limited Edition — touring

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Co. Inc., 100 West Alondra Blvd., Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $10,000

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke horizontally opposed four
Valve arrangement . . . . . single overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke . . . . . 75.5mm x 66.0mm
Displacement 1181.9cc
Compression ratio 9.0:1
Engine redline . . . . . 7500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . Nippondenso electronic fuel injection, four 32mm Keihin throttle bodies
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 490-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 20-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . inverted-tooth chain; 1.708:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Transmission-to-driveshaft drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 0.973:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 2.833:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.571	12.105	6.06
II	1.667	7.848	9.35
III	1.250	5.885	12.47
IV	1.000	4.708	15.59
V	0.800	3.766	19.49

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Showa air-spring, 41mm stanchion tube diameter, 4-position adjustable brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.4 in. (137mm)
Rear . . . . . dual Showa air-spring shocks / 4.1 in. (105mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.8-in. (274mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 11.4-in. (290mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 130/90-16 67H Dunlop Qualifier F11 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 150/90-15 74H Dunlop Qualifier K627 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

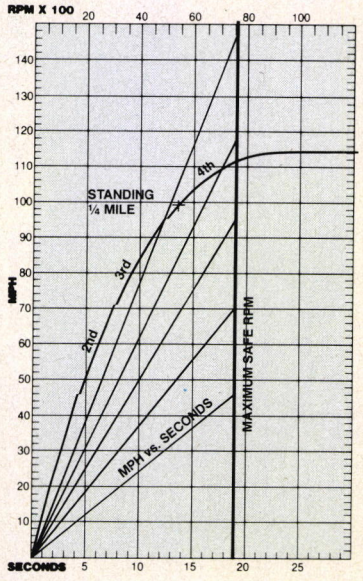
Weight . . . . . 810 lbs. (367.4kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 44.5% front, 55.5% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 1225 lbs. (556kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 380 lbs. (172kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 63.1 in. (1604mm)
Seat height . . . . . 31.1 in. (790mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 33.1 in. (840mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 11.1 in. (283mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.2 in. (132mm), at exhaust pipes
Steering head angle . . . . . 30.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 4.65 in. (118mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.4 qt. (3.2*l*)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.7 gal. (21.5*l*), no reserve
Instrumentation . . . LCD digital speedometer, odometer, LCD count-up tripmeter resettable to zero, LCD count-down tripmeter resettable from 1 to 999 miles, LCD digital tachometer, LCD bar-graph tachometer, LCD digital gear-position indicator, LCD voltmeter, LCD fuel gauge, LCD oil pressure gauge, LCD oil temperature gauge, LCD coolant temperature gauge, LCD suspension air pressure readout, LCD radio frequency readout, LCD digital clock with time-zone display

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 37 to 45 mpg (16 to 19 km/*l*)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 41 mpg (17 km/*l*)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 211 to 257 miles (340 to 413km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . no reserve capacity
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 29 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 52 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 13.346 sec., 98.36 mph (158 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 113 mph (182 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 34 ft. (10.4m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 134 ft. (40.8m)

WARRANTY: 12 months, unlimited mileage

AVAILABLE COLOR: Metallic Gold only



All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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PNEUS FORTS
M1705
TOURING ELITE
DUNLOP

Bred from endurance racing.

The long mileage, bias-belted Touring Elite was developed from the same technology as our belted endurance racing slicks... tires that have consistently won the World Championship of Endurance Racing, sweeping to victory at the most famous races... LeMans, Spa, and Monza.

For nearly 80 years Dunlop has taken our motorcycle tire technology to the great racetracks of the world... to prove our leadership where it counts.

And this unending pursuit of ultimate tire performance has created a legend... an incredible record of triumph that dates back to 1907.

Racetrack performance translates into open road conquest... even under the changing conditions of long distance touring.

So if you satisfy your wanderlust aboard a two-wheeled full-dress, cross-country cruiser, you want the touring tire with the endurance racing heritage... Dunlop Touring Elite.

Dunlop Touring Elite®

Engineered for the open road.

The Dunlop Touring Elite is constructed specifically to handle touring loads† and changing conditions. . .constantly delivering up to 15,000 miles of touring performance.*

Using the bias-belted carcass of our endurance racing slicks as a starting point, Dunlop engineered the Touring Elite to deliver the optimum combination of mileage and traction.

The firm bias-belted carcass provides a solid and secure footprint by reducing tread squirm at the contact patch. The high denier plies fight internal heat buildup - a tire's worst enemy at constant highway speeds - and prolong tire life.

† To obtain optimum performance and mileage from Touring Elite rear tires, cold inflation pressure should be a minimum of 36 PSI for light loads and 40 PSI for dual riding and other heavier loads. Never exceed maximum loads and pressures indicated on the sidewall of the tire.

The deep, abrasion-resistant tread is molded into the patented Elite pattern with transverse grooves. They help prevent rainstorms and rain grooves from turning your touring dream into a nightmare.

And flexible sidewalls designed to cushion the ride and load are reinforced by a high ply turnup and bead chafer.

When the open road throws you a curve, or Mother Nature rains on your parade. . . you can respond with the full-load, two-up confidence that only comes from riding on the legend. . . Dunlop.

Live the legend. See your authorized Dunlop dealer.

*Actual test results - Long Testing Associates

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Dunlop Tire Corporation, Buffalo, NY 14240-1109

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That's why when it comes to "smokin-it" Vance & Hines rely on RK's legendary strength. And like RK, Terry and Byron believe that there are no short cuts to success. The same dedication and commitment to excellence that took them to their record drag racing championships are put into every chain that RK makes.

So put on a legend and smoke the competition! RK Chain.

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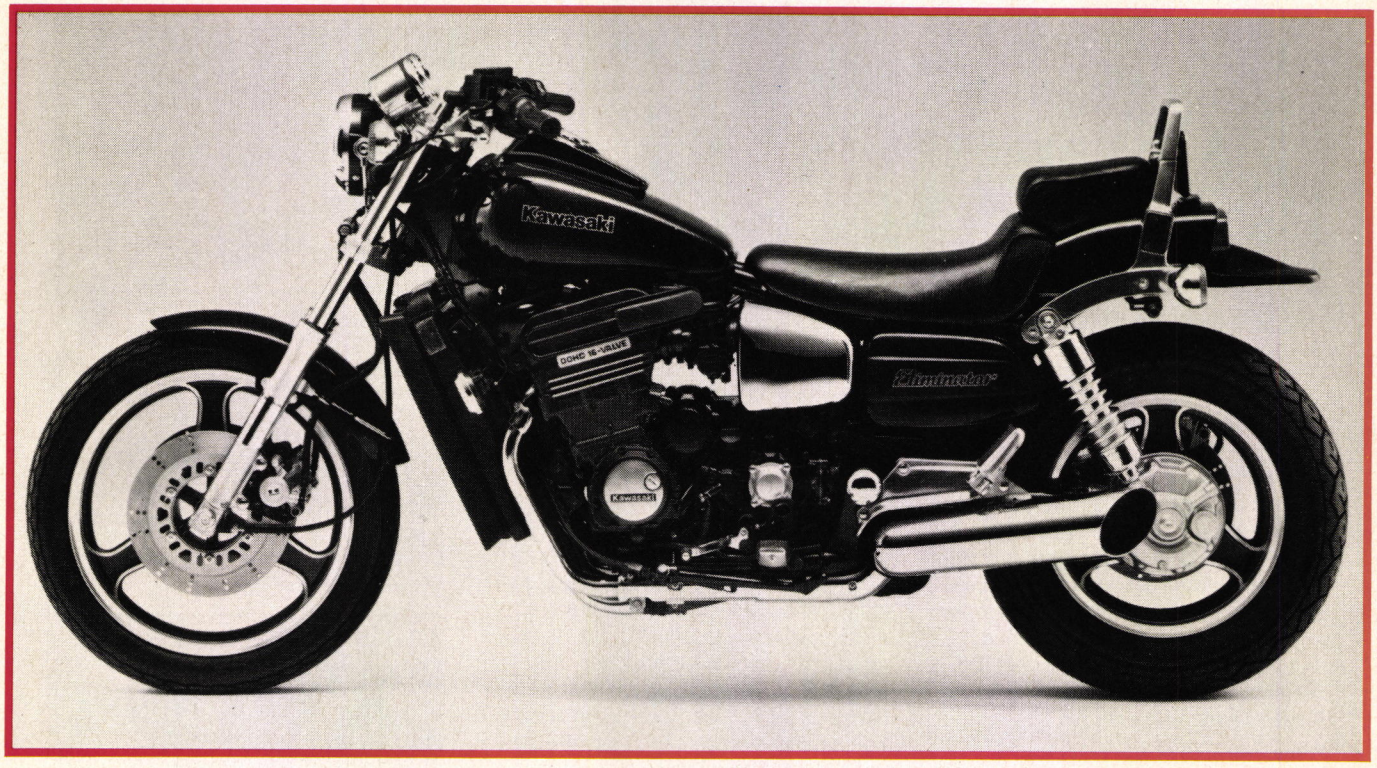
GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS



COMING SOON

• Honda's V65 Magna started the trend, Yamaha's Vmax continued it, and now Kawasaki has jumped onto the bandwagon with its Eliminator. The bike is the newest of that new breed of musclecruiser, a machine designed expressly for that quickly growing segment of American riders who lust for bikes with a dragracer's heart and a streetracer's feel. In just three short years these power-packed customs have become so popular in this country that Kawasaki calls them the beginning of a new era in American motorcycling.

Moreover, Kawasaki went to great lengths to get the Eliminator's styling *right* for the American market (see "American by Design," page 28). The bike's long, low and mean look, enhanced by its huge 160/80-15 rear tire and an almost-flat drag-style handlebar, is central

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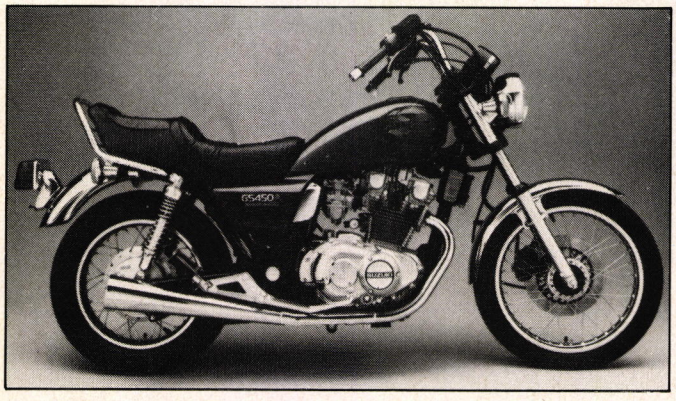
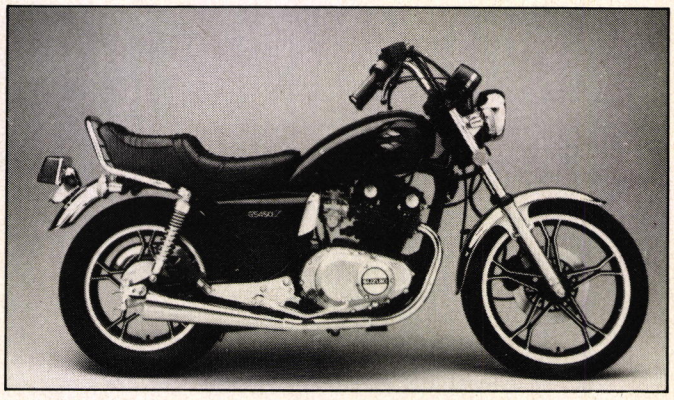


You could recommend the GS450GA to your grandmother

Even she could handle this two-speed automatic.



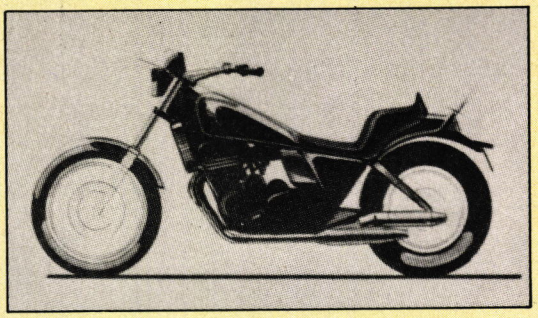
Beginning cruiser-riders need a beginning cruiserbike

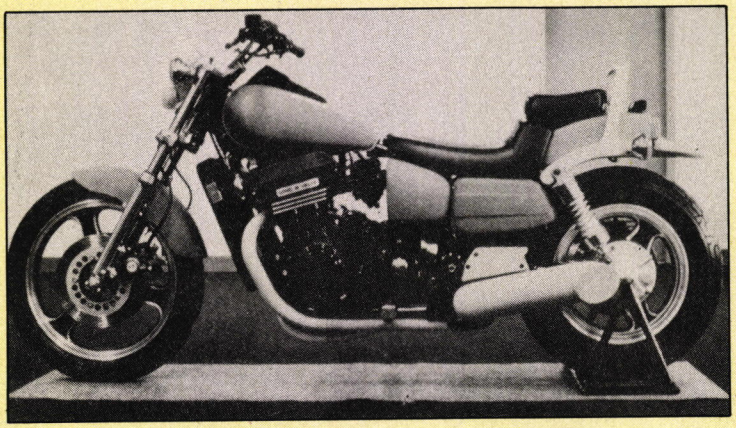
And Suzuki has just the machine—the '85 GS450L.

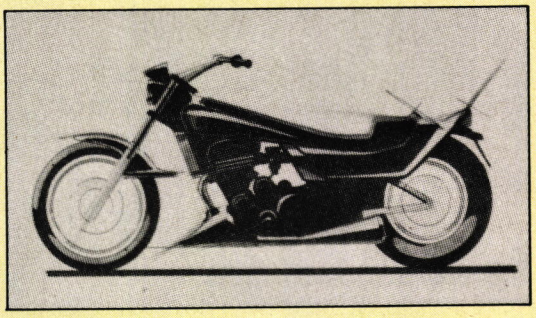
COMING SOON:

Kawasaki Eliminator

American by design.



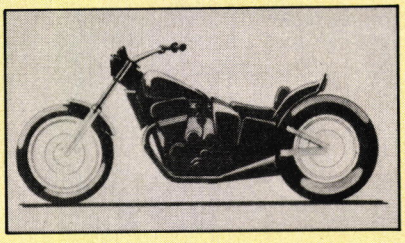


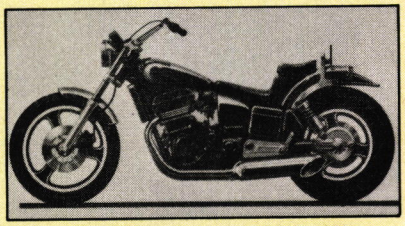


• Kawasaki's Eliminator didn't just spring full-blown from the mind of some engineer, only to debut at the Los Angeles opening of the Great American Motorcycle Show. In truth, the long, low and stylistically lean Eliminator was born almost two years ago, in the Technological Development Department of Kawasaki Heavy Industry's motorcycle division. And although the bike bears little resemblance to KHI's first styling sketches, the concept remained unchanged: The Eliminator would be a stretched-out, ground-hugging powerhouse meant primarily for the speed-hungry American market.

But the look that Kawasaki's latest street-scorcher evolved into wasn't left to chance. Indeed, far from it. The bike was designed by committee; a big committee. Teams of stylists and engineers from KHI traveled the length and breadth of this country, talking to American riders, going to American dragraces, rallies and anywhere else motorcyclists gathered, all the while listening and taking notes. Kawasaki Motors Corp. U.S.A. had its marketing, sales and communications departments doing the same thing. And the research generated reams of information on American preferences for certain fuel tank shapes and sizes, seat heights, handlebar positions and peg locations. That information, along with hundreds of other details, went to Toru Yamauchi, head stylist on the Eliminator project, who then set to work on the finalized version of the new bike. The result is a rolling testimonial to American tastes in motorcycle design.

So take a closer look at the Eliminator. Toru Yamauchi might have held the pen that drew it, but American motorcyclists guided it. *—Joe Kress*



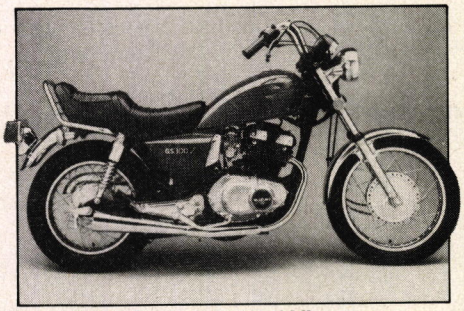


From the first sketch to the final model the Eliminator's look was predetermined in America.

to this brute-bike.

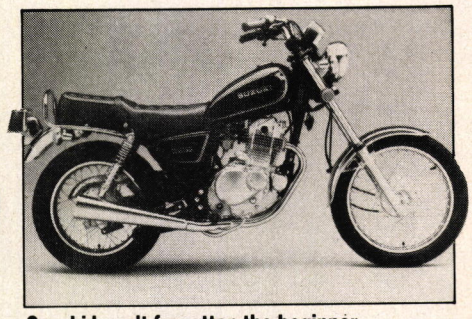
No less important, though, is the engine, and the right kind of horsepower for the Eliminator's mission. So Kawasaki shoehorned in a modified version of the Ninja 900's motor, a 908cc liquid-cooled inline-four. And, because Kawasaki believes most American motorcycling is done either in town or on freeways, the engineers tuned the Eliminator's transverse-four for inner-city warfare, rather than retain the Ninja's top-end surge.

To that end, the Eliminator's motor has 32mm carburetors in place of the Ninja's 34mm mixers, a different exhaust system, and shorter-duration, lower-lift cams. Those changes help move peak power further down the scale compared to a Ninja, and provide far greater midrange punch. There's a tradeoff, though; the Ninja has more peak horsepower than the Eliminator. But Kawasaki claims the Eliminator's tuning provides substantial increases in both torque and horsepower below 8000 rpm, and matches the Ninja in peak torque. And that, Kawasaki says, translates into performance that will power the bike through a short distance—say an American city block—quicker than any streetbike it has ever manufactured.



Suzuki's high-tech entry-level bike

TSCC trickle-down for the GS300L.



Suzuki hasn't forgotten the beginner

This '85 GN250 Single proves it.

Appropriately enough, Kawasaki's contribution to that uniquely American breed of musclebike will be built in America at the company's Lincoln, Nebraska, plant. It should be in the showrooms as you read this, and will

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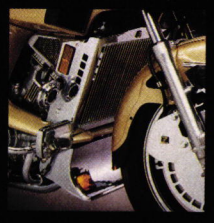

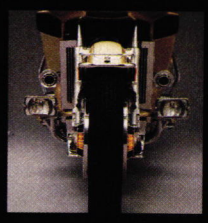

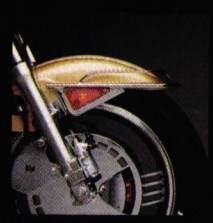

RIDE TO A NEW HORIZON

Getting there is just riding. If you're touring, you feel it. At Yamaha, we know what that means. So we design accessories that let your Venture keep its personality while you're expressing yours.

After all, what's the point of looking good if you can't enjoy the ride?

VentureLine. Available only at your local Yamaha dealer.

YAMAHA

Built for the fun of it.

YOU HAVE 12 CHANCES TO WIN THE MOTORCYCLE OF YOUR DREAMS IN CYCLE GUIDE'S ALL NEW 1985 SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES

ALL NEW

You are invited to enter the CYCLE GUIDE 1985 SUPER $60,000 SWEEPSTAKES. You may be the LUCKY GRAND PRIZE WINNER who will drive away with a Nissan Long Bed 4×4 Sport Truck with a Kawasaki KDX200 in the back, or a BMW K100 with a sporty EML Sidecar, or a full dress Honda Aspencade.

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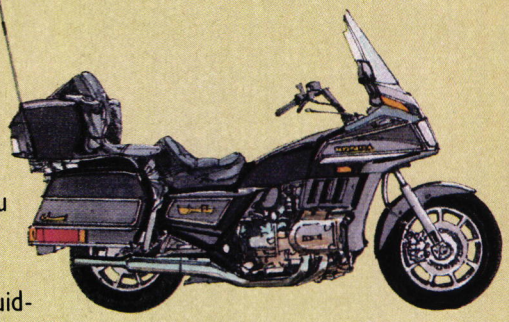
1 GRAND PRIZE

NISSAN 4×4/KDX200

Take a top-of-the-line Nissan 4×4 Long Bed Sport Truck, fit it with options and extras, then load that long bed with Kawasaki's woodswise KDX200. We did. And we call it the Ultimate Off-Road Package.

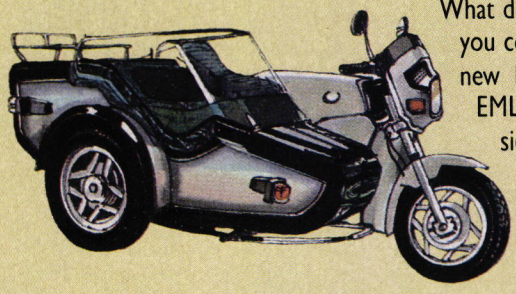
HONDA GL1200A ASPENCADE



Here's proof you *can* take it with you. From its liquid-cooled, shaft-drive 1182cc engine to its high-tech stereo sound system, the Aspencade epitomizes long-haul, American-style touring.

3 FIRST PRIZES THE LITER-BIKE OF YOUR CHOICE

BMW K100/EML SPORT SIDECAR



What do you get when you couple BMW's new K100 Four with EML's S-type sport sidecar? Not only Euro-style high performance for rider and passengers, but the class sidecar rig of the open road.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON XLS ROADSTER

The Roadster is one vee-twin factory cruiser that does more than just look the part of the mean-streets machine; this original Milwaukee Iron *lives* it!

YAMAHA V-MAX

Sure, this new vee-four Yamaha has radical styling, but the real story is horsepower, 135 horsepower, to be exact. Watch for it in the quarter-mile—but look quickly.

HONDA VF1000R

Ever wish for a racebake with lights? This is it. From its gear-driven cams to its racy full fairing, the VF1000R is ready to take on the street—or the track.

SUZUKI GS1150E

Follows in the tire prints of the most versatile hyperbike ever built, the GS1100, but with even more power and bolder styling!

SWEEPSTAKES CONTEST

One entry gives you 477 chances to win one of 477 total prizes—with a total value of OVER $60,000!

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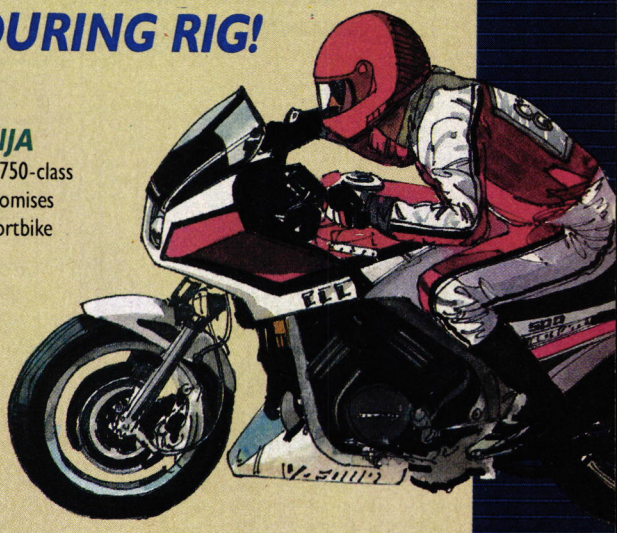

8 SECOND PRIZES YOUR CHOICE OF:

HUSQVARNA 510TX
Riders who know are calling this the best four-stroke motocrosser of all time.

KAWASAKI KX500
Built to dominate American Open-class motocross, no if's, and's or but's.

HONDA XR600R
Take it straight from the crate and head for Baja.

YAMAHA IT200N
Ready for the woods or the desert with more horsepower than ever before.

SUZUKI LT230GEF QUADRUNNER
Suzuki's newest four-wheeler, with shaft drive, reverse and an automatic clutch.

HONDA ATC200X
Four-stroke power and five speeds, in a three-wheel package.

KAWASAKI 600R NINJA
This all-new 600 Ninja, with 750-class power and 500-class size, promises to be *the* middleweight sportbike to beat.

YAMAHA FZ750
What do five valves per cylinder, an 11,000-rpm redline and a 16-inch front wheel add up to? Yamaha's race-ready FZ750.

KAWASAKI 454 LTD
An all-new belt-drive, six-speed cruiser, with a mechanical heritage that traces back to Kawasaki's Ninja hyperbike.

SUZUKI SP600F
This big-motor dual-purpose bike is built to get you there, no matter where "there" is!

KAWASAKI KL250R
Put simply, the highest-tech quarter-liter on/off-road bike ever!

YAMAHA RZ350
Own a part of Yamaha's GP racing victories with the liquid-cooled RZ, the only two-stroke sportbike available in the U.S.

HONDA VF500F INTERCEPTOR
Handling so good it makes you a better rider, coupled with vee-four power so strong you won't believe this is "just" a 500.

SUZUKI GS550ES
More than just fast; last year, we called it the best-steering middleweight sportbike, and nothing's changed for 1985.

15 THIRD PRIZES

SHOEI RF105V HELMET
Shoei's latest full-coverage helmet. Snell Foundation's 1985 certification, a ratcheting faceshield and adjustable vents make it the helmet of choice for riders in the know.

50 FOURTH PRIZES

ECLIPSE SPORTPACK TANKBAG
A Cordura nylon bag that will carry everything you need for a day ride, and expands to hold a weekend's worth of gear. A well thought-out, high-quality—and high capacity—tankbag.

100 FIFTH PRIZES

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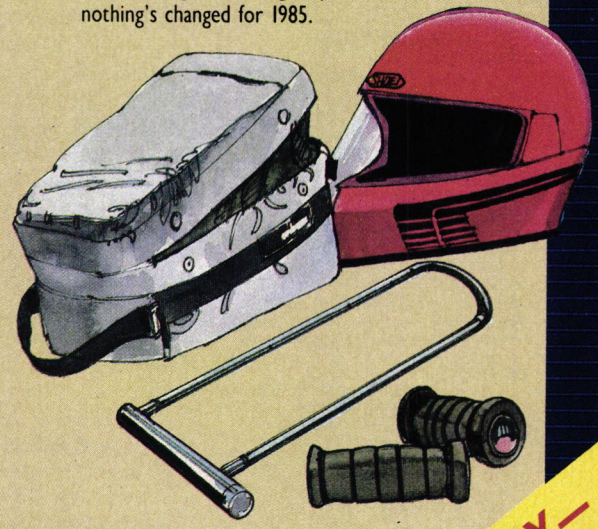

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Z-100 Tri-color	146.76
ARAI	
Supervent	129.95
Signature Supervent	149.95

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110/90-18	53.95	100/90-18	53.95
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• Few riders start out on such high-performance musclebikes, though. And for new riders, Suzuki has *four* entry-level bikes in its 1985 lineup: the GN250 four-valve single, the GS300L eight-valve double-overhead-cam twin, the GS450L cruiser, and the GS450GA, maybe the best in the business for a first-time rider. So what makes the 450GA such a good choice for the beginner? The letter "A" is an indication: It stands for automatic, referring to the bike's two-speed transmission and torque convertor. And that feature, coupled to a shaft final-drive, is still a logical incentive for a tyro to get up on two wheels—even in 1985.

FEDERAL CASES

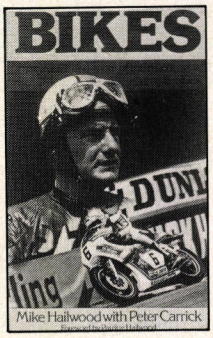
• "The 55-mph speed limit is one of the most effective highway safety policies ever adopted." That's the conclusion of the National Academy of Science, anyway, voiced through a 19-member committee in a study on the double nickel. The report credits the 10-year-old speed limit with saving 2000-4000 lives a year, cutting $2 billion in fuel costs, and is likely to become holy scripture to 55-mph advocates everywhere. To groups battling the law (the Citizens Coalition for Rational Traffic Laws and the American Motorcyclist Association being the most vocal), the findings came as no surprise, because the committee's decision was common knowledge months before the study was released: It would be a rubber-stamp endorsement of the federal speed limit.

But the committee charged with making a complete study of the national speed limit sidestepped the central issue: whether the state governments—rather than the federal government—should be allowed to establish a speed limit on a given highway. The Academy explained its lack of action by saying, "Much of the debate about the appropriate role of state or federal government turns on philosophical differences that cannot be reconciled by analysis." The report does, however, recommend a revamp of the federal system for monitoring state compliance with the national speed limit. Speeding fines, it seems, do little to slow down the country's motorists.

The study did concede, however, that 31,500 miles of rural interstate highway, roads that carry 19 percent of the nation's traffic, account for only 9 percent of all traffic fatalities annually. The committee stopped short, though, of recommending that Congress give states the right to increase the speed limit on those highways, based on their safety performance.

• Safety considerations of another sort are making news in New Jersey and Rhode Island. Both states have bills before their legislatures prohibiting youngsters from riding as passengers on motorcycles. In New Jersey, A-504 would ban anyone under the age of 10 from riding on a bike, whereas Rhode Island's S-38 would extend that prohibition up to 14-year-old would-be passengers.

Book Review



Bikes: Thirty years and more of the motorcycle championships.
by Mike Hailwood with Peter Carrick
148 pages, $16.95
U.S. distribution by
David & Charles Inc.
North Pomfret, Vermont 05053

• Only two riders have bettered the late Mike Hailwood's accomplishment of winning nine world championships: Giacomo Agostini with 15, and Angel Nieto with 10. On the face of it, then, Hailwood's record certainly equipped him with the credentials to explain the world of Grand Prix motorcycle racing. And his posthumously published "Bikes: Thirty years and more. . ." holds out the promise of delivering an insider's view of the GP circus.

Unfortunately, that view doesn't come through in this book, at least not completely. Hailwood showed undisputed prowess on a motorcycle, but not behind a typewriter, and even with the help of British journalist Peter Carrick, this book provides little more than a superficial overview of the champions and their bikes. Moreover, parts of the book just don't make sense, at least not in the established context. Dropped right into the middle of the text, for example, is a biography of Soichiro Honda, starting with his boyhood.

The Honda episode is indicative of the book's larger problem: "Bikes: Thirty years and more. . ." tries to cover too much ground. Hailwood and Carrick felt the need to include every rider, every marque and every race ever contested for championship points. And a 148-page book is simply too small to do justice to the subject.

In fairness, though, the book does have some merit. The two concluding chapters, "All The Champions," and "Results Table," offer a wealth of information: "Champions" gives a comprehensive listing of every world champion in every GP class since 1949. The "Results Table" lists the first-, second- and third-place finishers in every class, through 1981. But $16.95 seems a high price to pay for such quick-reference guides, however useful. "Mike the Bike" must have had more to say, but we don't get to hear it. At least not here.

—Joe Kress

• Pennsylvania riders, on the other hand, just might be able to sidestep a bit of bureaucratic red tape, provided they've passed a rider-education class. House Bill H-1384 would exempt any graduate of a riding-skill course from having to take the state's motorcycle-licensing test.

HARD CASH

• It could be easier than ever to wheel home on a new bike this season, because one of the country's oldest automobile leasing companies is poised to enter the two-wheel market. Gaines Service Leasing Corp., a New York-based firm established in 1929, has formed the Gaines Motorcycle Leasing subsidiary, which will start operation this spring. What's more, Gaines' Easy Lease plan will cover *anything* a member dealer offers for sale. That includes not only motorcycles, but three- and four-wheel ATVs, Jet Skis, snowmobiles and accessories, too. The Easy Lease program won't require a down payment, and the monthly payments include full insurance coverage for the rider, and an insurance policy that covers major mechanical defects for the machine. A Gaines-program dealer will have a company-installed computer terminal to qualify potential leasees; and if a person's credit history checks out, he could ride away on a new bike after less than an hour's worth of paperwork. The Easy Lease plan has a buy-out option at the termination of the lease, too.

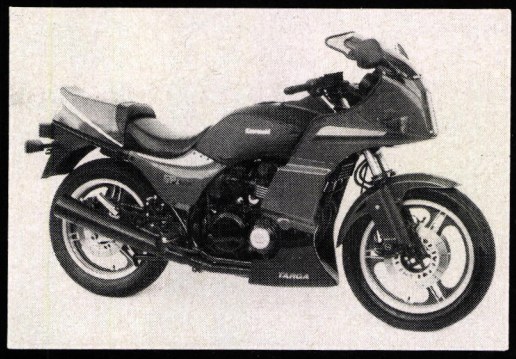
• And now that the glut of non-current machinery finally has been whittled down, the Japanese manufacturers want to drum up buyer interest in the latest hardware. As a result, most of the manufacturers' proposed ad budgets for '85 reflect a renewed interest in advertising, according to ADWEEK magazine. Honda, the industry sales-leader, is the exception, though, holding its spending close to the 1984 level of $35 million. But number-two Yamaha will up its budget considerably from last year's figure of $5.5 million, and possibly even return to television advertising. Kawasaki and Suzuki intend to buy more ads for '85 too, but the pitches will target specific strengths. Kawasaki's approach, for example, will draw on its performance image. And Suzuki will spend an estimated $15 million to proclaim that riders and the firm's motorcycles "work like a single moving part."

• Prospective BMW buyers can start eyeballing their piggy banks; that company has announced prices for its '85 lineup. The least expensive Deutsche bike is the R65, at $3700. Next up are the new R80 and the R80G/S, both tagged at $4300, and the long-haul R80RT touring bike rounds out the 800cc line at $5700. Inline-four Beemers start at $5990 for the base K100, run to $7200 for the sport-touring K100RS, and peak at $7500 for BMW's fully equipped four-cylinder touring rig, the K100RT.

• Britbike fans rejoice; Triumph motorcycles should land on U.S. shores this year. Although

Continued

TARGA GPz ACCESSORIES



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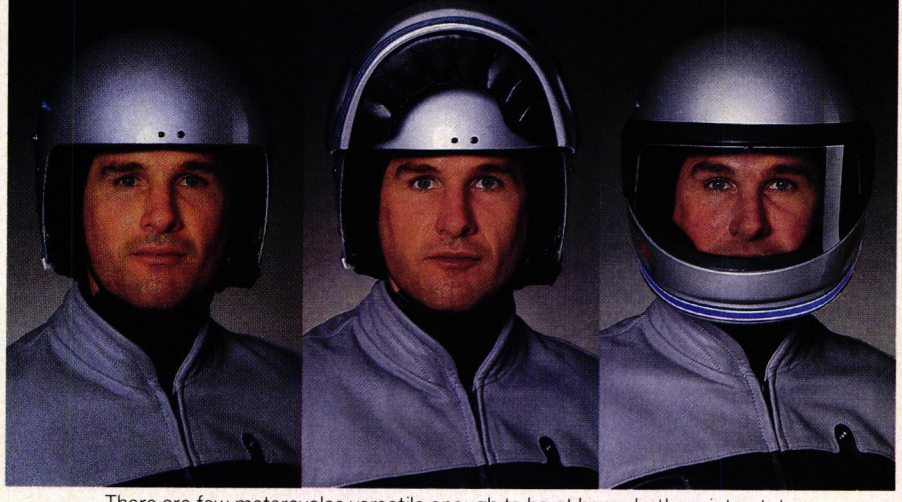
THE MOTORCYCLE HELMET THAT'S MORE ADAPTABLE THAN MOST MOTORCYCLES.



There are few motorcycles versatile enough to be at home both on interstates and gravel paths, but there's a motorcycle accessory that is: the BMW System Helmet.

It transforms from a classic integral helmet to an off-road model. It slips on or off in seconds (even while wearing eyeglasses). And its anti-misting face-shield adjusts to six positions.

You'll also value the lightness and strength of its fiberglass-reinforced polyester shell. The noise- and drag-reducing virtues of its wind tunnel-shaped styling. And the reflective trim for night riding.

We suggest you bike over to your BMW dealer and test-wear this European design-award winner. All three of it.

THE LEGENDARY MOTORCYCLES OF GERMANY.

BMW

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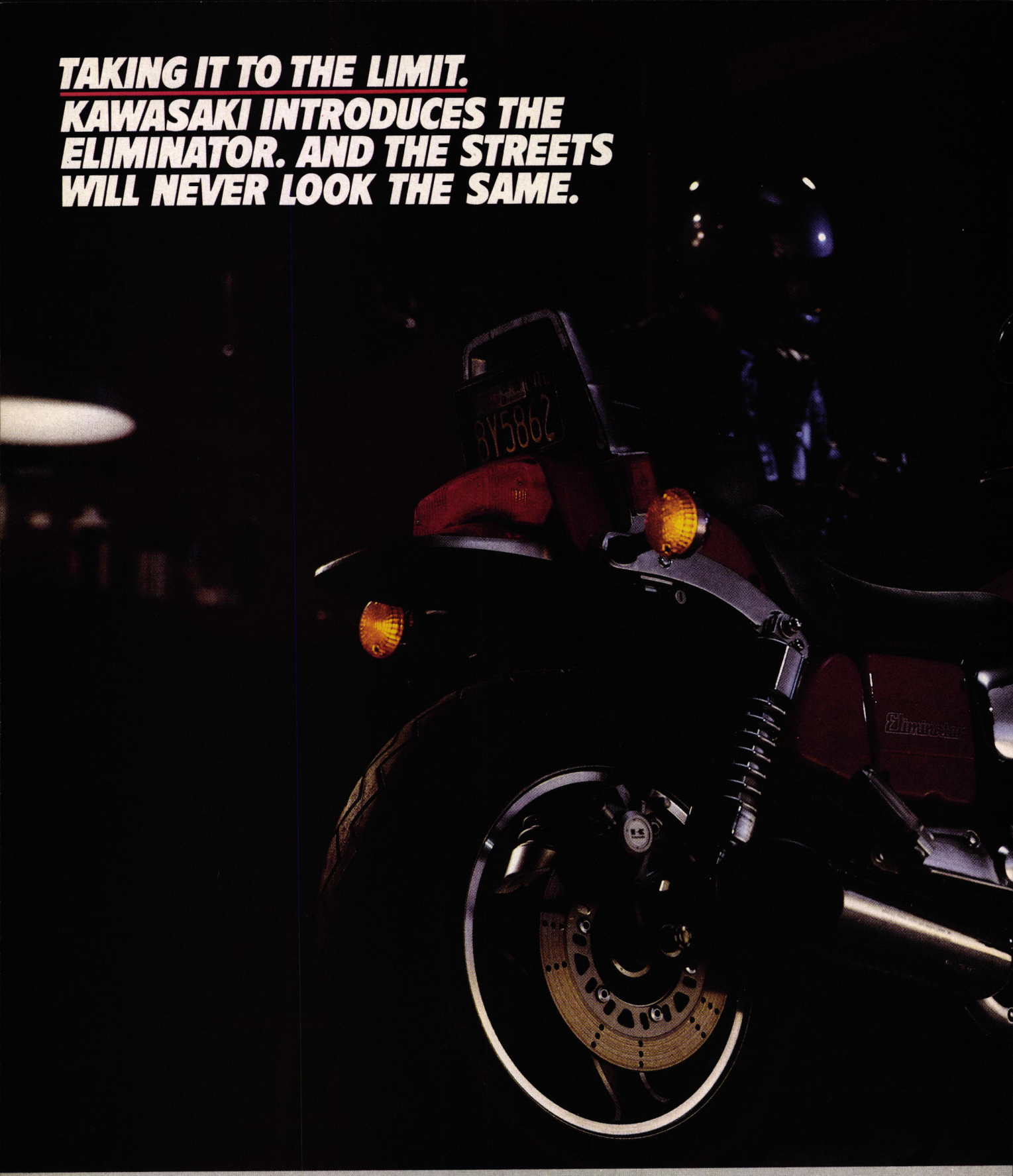
TAKING IT TO THE LIMIT. KAWASAKI INTRODUCES THE ELIMINATOR. AND THE STREETS WILL NEVER LOOK THE SAME.



We know, we know. It's the longest, lowest frame you've ever seen.

Kawasaki had never seen anything like The Eliminator either. Not until we made it.

We've conjured up a machine that defies all convention. That completely redefines what a street bike is. What it should look like.

The Eliminator doesn't fit any existing mind-set. So it has created a new one entirely for itself. Just like the first in-line four's and Kawasaki's LTD cruisers before it.

The Eliminator's chassis reflects the classic simplicity of another time. Simple dual shocks, pure uncluttered forks.

But looks are deceiving. This sophisticated, air-adjustable suspension system delivers a smoother-than-smooth ride at any speed.

And that's where the engine comes in.

The Eliminator is powered by the technological tour de force that

Specifications subject to change

is Ninja nirvana—a 908cc liquid-cooled, DOHC, 16-valved legend.

You want acceleration? It runs 0-50 in 2.16 seconds. By the time your competition has climbed onto their powerband, you're in the next gear. And the next county!

The Eliminator has triple disc brakes. Shaft drive. And the fattest, traction-grabbing rear tire on pavement.

Kawasaki has extended the concept of cruiser styling and performance power to create a breakthrough bike. A machine that takes you where you didn't even know you could go.

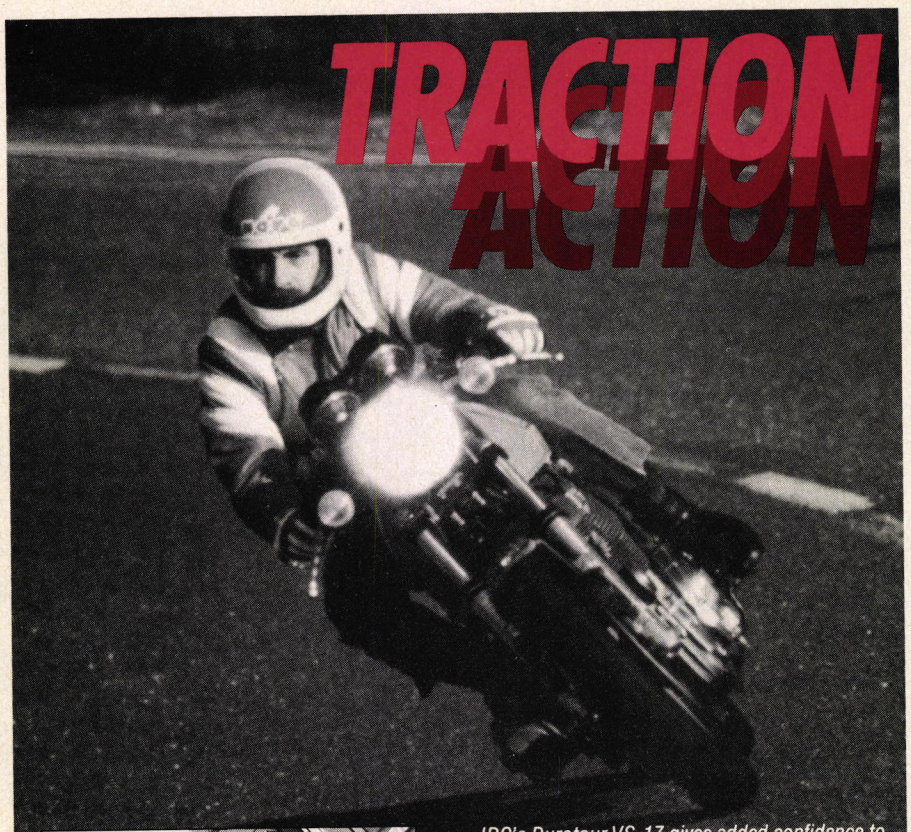
We had to create The Eliminator before you could want it. You'll have to have The Eliminator after you've seen it.

And nothing will ever be the same. Especially you.

Kawasaki

TAKING IT TO THE LIMIT

without notice. Availability may be limited. Always wear a helmet and appropriate apparel. Call 1-800-447-4700 for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation beginner or expert course near you.



IRC's Durotour VS-17 gives added confidence to canyon blasters, superbikers and touring enthusiasts. Specifically designed for the hard-charging sport rider, VS-17 delivers—even under the most demanding conditions. For acceleration. Braking. Cornering. VS-17 is hyper-performance at an affordable price!

The newly developed high-grip compound and computerized tread pattern grab the asphalt with "hi-tech claws." V-rated up to 150 mph, the VS-17 (tube/tubeless) is a top-of-the-line, low-profile tire that handles with scalpel-like precision.

So if you're looking for traction action, check out the Durotour VS-17 at your local dealer. It's the "edge" you've been waiting for. IRC also offers a complete line of other performance tires, including the high-mileage HS-210.

VS-17

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LAS VEGAS LEGACY:

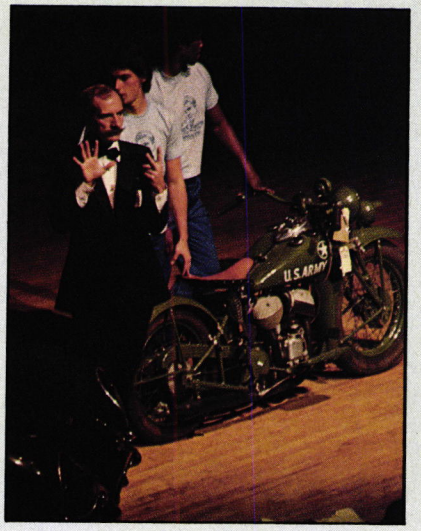
The Steve McQueen Motorcycle Auction

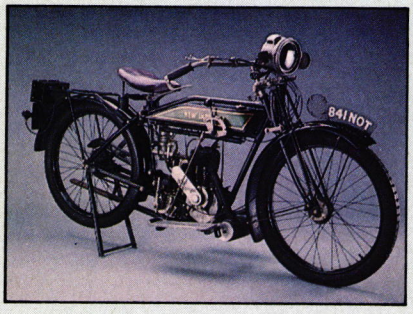
On Any Sunday.

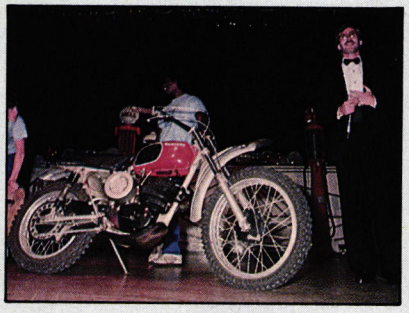
• For motorcycle collectors, the Las Vegas auction of the late Steve McQueen's dazzling collection of 100 vintage motorcycles was the great motorcycle event they'd been waiting for. At the Imperial Palace Hotel, more than 300 vintage-motorcycle devotees gathered on the Sunday following Thanksgiving to watch McQueen's motorcycles fall to the auctioneer's gavel. Some of the attendees were there to bid; others came just to savor the parade of motorcycles across the Palace's stage.

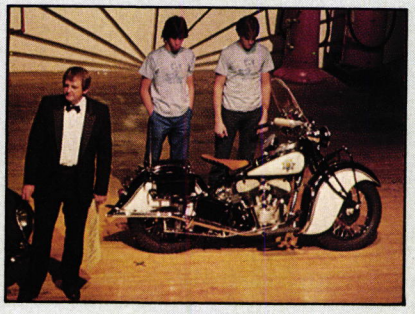
The array of motorcycles was an impressive one, including a wide variety of makes (although Indians and Harley-Davidsons were the most numerous). Many of the motorcycles—dating from 1899 to 1974—were newly restored, but there were also a number of basket cases, a multitude of spare parts, and skeletons ready to be cannibalized. Serious collectors could vie for anything from sidecars to cylinder heads, from a Danish Nimbus to an exotic Pierce—for the right price. Not everyone in the auction room came to acquire a vintage motorcycle, or pieces of one. Even so, the bidding among aficionados was furious, with flurried exchanges and wagging fingers.

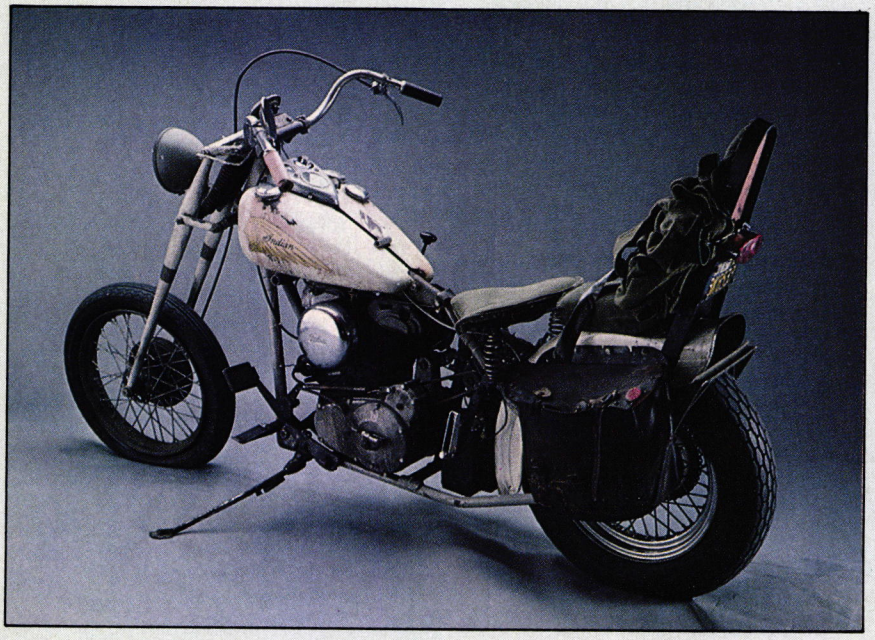
In some cases, though, the bidding seemed to get out of hand. For instance, early in the auction, McQueen's 1974 Yamaha DT360A Enduro sold for $4250, and there were those who believed the "stardom factor" would cause all the prices to be artificially high. Yet, one expert noted that most of the bids were realistic, reflecting a trend toward upward-spiralling prices in vintage motorcycles. For example, a beautifully restored 1929 Harley-Davidson Speedy Two Cam Twin commanded $9500. Furthermore, if you'd had $15,550 plus change, you could have ridden through hail and sleet and the dead of night in a a 1930 Indian Chief U.S. Mail sidecar. In addition, McQueen's 1972 Husqvarna, reputedly used in the film, "On Any Sunday," brought in $4750. And a 1909 four-cylinder Pierce, the last bike to be sold, reached the high-water mark of

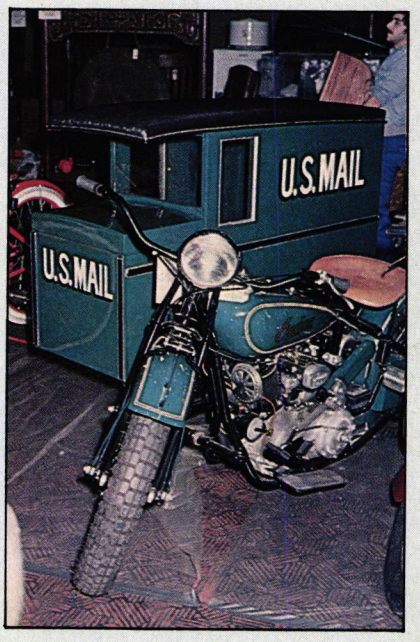












PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

the motorcycle auction at $25,000.

Obviously, then, many of McQueen's motorcycles possessed intrinsic or historical value. But one of the seeming exceptions was his 1947 chopped Indian Chief, which sold for $6000 (the final bid accompanied by a few chuckles). As an *objet d'art*, the rust-ridden Indian lacked any discernible qualities. But according to McQueen's friend and fellow motorcycle collector, Bud Ekins, the well-used Indian chopper was the actor's favorite motorcycle, the one he faithfully rode. Said Ekins: "He used to call it his rat bike. So he wouldn't be recognized, he'd put on his white stroker cap, dark glasses, throw a bedroll on the front and take off for the weekend. Nobody'd pay any attention to him."

The '47 Indian chopper (which the Imperial Palace Hotel reportedly purchased for its wax museum), then, had a special kind of history all its own—star-kissed, as it were. And so ranged the spectrum of McQueen's collection, from humble, rusted old parts to rare restorations to a favorite steed. History wheeled across the auction stage that Sunday, a parade of Steve McQueen's legacy to the world.

—David Mallet

Continued

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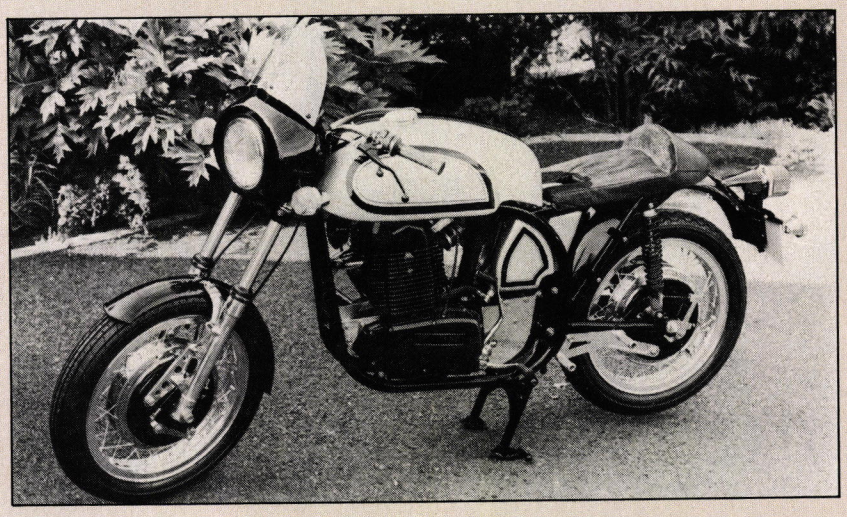
SPECIALTY FILE:

Brooklands Builds Another

The third time is the charm.

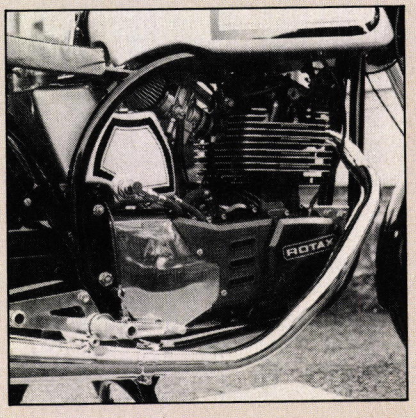


• Never underestimate the power of nostalgia. Nostalgia, for instance, helped create the Brooklands 40M (Guide Lines, October '83), that British-built replica of the classic Norton Manx roadster. In fact, apart from the engine—a four-valve single supplied by Weslake, a manufacturer best known for its speedway-racing motors—the 40M was an almost perfect copy of a Fifties-era Norton, right down to its Roadholder fork. But that speedway-inspired powerplant became a major production problem for the 40M: Weslake went out of business, taking Brooklands' supply of engines with it. Ian Thompson, Brooklands' driving force, wasn't through, though, and at the 1984 IFMA Expo in Cologne, Germany, Thompson unveiled his company's latest neo-classic: the GB500 Clubman.

The Clubman, of course, is the old 40M, but powered this time around by an engine from a more reliable source—Rotax. Thompson didn't merely plug in the Austrian-made single to fill the void left by Weslake's demise, however; he took the opportunity to rethink the entire 40M concept. And the result is a Fifties-era looker that not only retains the feel of the fabled Manx, but is more in step with modern technology, too. The new Clubman features a number of changes that make the machine more civilized, easier to service, and that allow the bike to accept readily available replacement parts.

In addition to the Rotax motor, for example, a number of Japanese-made singles now can bolt into the Clubman's Featherbed-replica frame. And the old 40M's Roadholder-style fork has given way to a new Marzocchi unit, teamed up with a pair of fully adjustable Marzocchi rear dampers. Furthermore, the new Clubman rolls on Borrani alloy rims, uses Bosch electrics and points its way with a halogen headlight (illumination definitely not available on a 1950-model Britbike). Based on the specifications, at least, it would seem that Ian Thompson used his forced production hiatus after the fall of Weslake to good advantage. The GB500 Clubman appears to be everything the old 40M Manx was, and perhaps a lot more.

Don't expect to see a Clubman on every corner in the country, though. Even if there *were* a U.S. importer—and there isn't—this is a bike that appeals only to a select few. But if you're one of those riders who's motivated by nostalgia, yet still wants something with modern refinements, drop Brooklands a line at 51 Green Acres, Ludlow, Shropshire, England SY8 1LY. Just close the letter with "Hail Britannia—and Italy, Austria and Japan." *—Joe Kress*



R&D problems have delayed the arrival of the Racing Spares-built Bonnevilles (Guide Lines, March '84), the true-Brit company now appears ready to roll, as signified by Triumph Motorcycles Ltd. membership on the Motorcycle Industry Council.

• And in other Anglophile news, U.S. sidecar fans now have a direct link to the popular British-built Watsonian chair. Side Strider, of Van Nuys, California, American distributor for the Watsonian, has bought the firm's sidecar factory in England.

• Thanks to American Honda and other motorcycle companies, future mechanics will have state-of-the-art hardware to work on while learning their trade. Honda, as part of its annual $5 million, 2000-bike donation to schools all across the country, just gave 30 new machines to Motorcycle Mechanics Institute, of Phoenix, Arizona. MMI also received bikes, tools and equipment from Harley-Davidson and Suzuki, along with other training aids from the aftermarket. MMI, incidentally, offers the only factory-sponsored training program for Harley-Davidsons.

RUMORS

• Kawasaki's 908cc Eliminator might be today's news, but we've heard that a bigger-displacement version of that just-released musclebike is already in the works. Our sources say Kawasaki will stay with its liquid-cooled, 16-valve, inline-four engine configuration, but that its displacement will climb to a massive 1300cc.

• In addition, the research Kawasaki conducted for its Eliminator project has netted some encouragement for another new bike the company is hard at work on. Kawasaki not only found that American riders like quarter-mile-inspired musclebikes, but that they want 700-750cc vee-twin-powered semi-sport machines, too. So it seems that Kawasaki has a market ready and waiting for its mainstream-styled Vulcan variant.

• We've also heard that one manufacturer has taken an unusual approach to the problem of radiated engine heat. That manufacturer's big-rig touring bike practically fries its pilot with engine heat in warm weather, and the solution would take the form of an on-board air-conditioning system, ducted through the lower bodywork. What's more, you might see such a system on a 1986 model. And you thought these bikes had reached their limits?

• And while we're talking about limits, don't be surprised to see Suzuki set some new ones with its performance-oriented four-wheelers. The two-stroke-powered Quadracer, we're told, is just a beginning. Look for a full 500cc Open-classer next.

• That is, if Honda doesn't get to it first. We've heard that Honda plans to celebrate its AMA Grand National Championship win with an American-inspired, chain-drive, 750cc vee-twin for the street. Our sources say this one could come as soon as the middle of '85. We'll be waiting.

Continued

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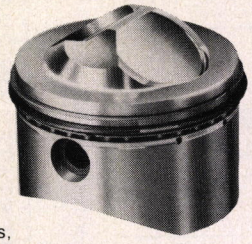

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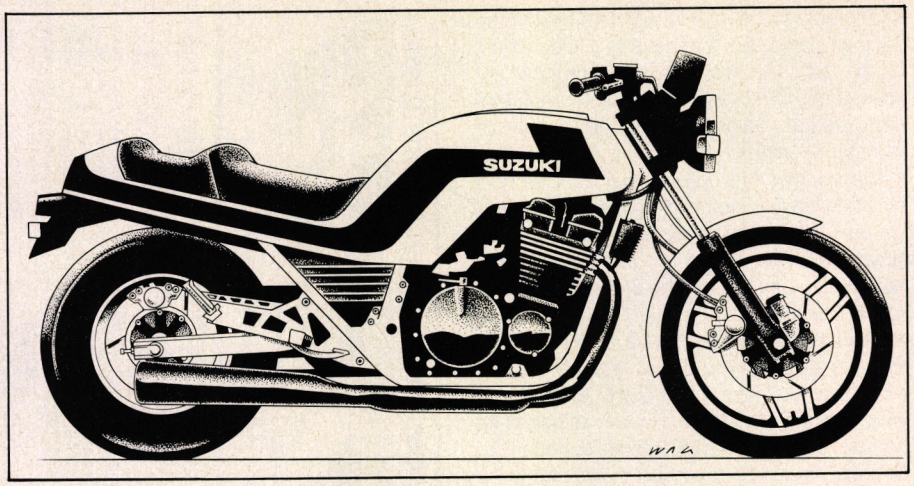


This Terry Vance Replica could be Suzuki's entry into motorcycling's hottest new market that emphasizes style and eyeball-flattening straight-line acceleration. Based on the startlingly quick GS1150E, this race-replica Suzuki borrows heavily from the Pro Stock title-winning Vance & Hines race machine. And the resemblance is far more than just skin-deep; our sources report the lowered-and-lengthened 1150 will have more power, too. Just the thing for hunting down a Vmax or Eliminator.

AFTER THE FACT

• In the February 1985 issue, we ran a report in Motomart on the Targa Formula Cowling for Honda's VF500F Interceptor. The photo, however, had nothing to do with an Interceptor or the cowling. Readers interested in the Targa piece can see it on page 14. CYCLE GUIDE regrets the error.

APART FROM THE CROWD

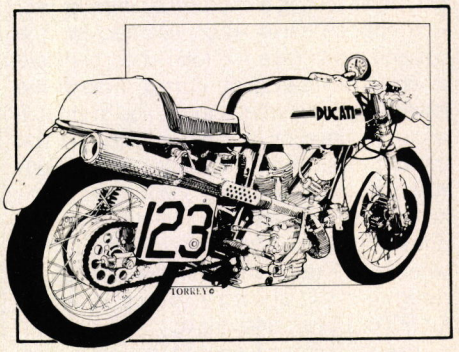
• Get that classic bike out of mothballs, because the 1985 Great American Race is right around the corner. The $250,000 rally for pre-1937 vehicles (including motorcycles) has some new wrinkles this year, too. Instead of finishing at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway as it had in the past, the Great Race will go all the way to New York City this time, making it a 3300-mile run for that $100,000 first-place money. The date has been changed, too; instead of a Memorial Day finish, the rally now winds up as part of the Big Apple's Fourth of July festivities, even becoming part of a parade down Broadway.

• And the "One Lap of America" rally will be rerun in '85, too, with yet another Harley-Davidson entrant. Sort of. George Fallar, of Mamaroneck, New York, will pilot a Trihawk in this year's One Lap, and in H-D tradition, he'll be raising money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, as well. He's soliciting pledges for his Lap, either as a single contribution or on a per-mile basis. It's a safe bet Fallar popped for the Trihawk's optional roof package.

• But just how deep into their wallets will Harley aficionados dig for H-D-licensed jewelry? We'll soon find out. The Motor Company recently concluded an agreement with Stamper Black Hills Gold Jewelry, allowing use of the H-D name on Black Hill's high-dollar ornaments. That's personal ornaments; no solid-gold, gem-studded sparklies for the Harleys themselves. Not yet, anyway.

• Network television tends to ignore motorcycle racing, and according to the latest Harris Sports Survey, the situation probably won't get much better. The nationwide telephone survey asked viewers to list what sports they watched on television, and what sports they would like to watch. And the results weren't encouraging, because they showed that peoples' interest in sports is waning in general, and motorcycle racing in particular wasn't even mentioned.

• Finally, residents of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, could give you a whole new definition for the term "street crime." It seems that an entire block in a quiet section of that historic city was stolen; corner-to-corner, curb-to-curb—gone. It's no mystery *why* the street was taken, because 200-year-old granite paving blocks are worth plenty. The real question, of course, is *how* the street was taken. It was there one day and simply gone the next. And no one noticed anything strange going on?



• Recently, we were saddened to learn of the death of CYCLE GUIDE contributor Torrey Heeb. Torrey's illustrations have brightened the pages of this magazine for several years, and the quality and detail of his work was consistently top-notch. He will be missed. ●

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Eclipse Electric Vest

An electric fence between you and the cold.

• Some street riders will do almost *anything* to fend off the cold demon. They'll bolt fairings onto their bikes, climb into bulky cold-weather suits, and layer on clothing until they look fit for an expedition to Everest. But those things amount to little more than a holding action. They only keep the cold demon at bay; they don't knock him flat.

Eclipse's Electric Vest, though, offers a more direct solution to the problem. Rather than just trying to shut out cold, the vest *warms* you, and it works in the same fashion as an electric blanket. Two 12-foot-long loops of wire coil through the vest and its corduroy-lined collar; the wires' resistance converts electrical energy to heat. A separate coiled cord with an off/on switch plugs into the vest, and into a fused (10-amp) lead that connects to the motorcycle's battery or accessory terminal.

What's more, the Eclipse vest provides a second line of defense against the cold: A layer of 3M Thinsulate, placed outside of the wiring, helps retain the heat. The vest's shell itself consists of a gray, 6-ounce nylon oxford body and a black taffeta yoke—both fabrics are urethane-coated—and the lining is black, 4-ounce ripstop nylon. Plus, there are two handwarmer pockets on the outside of the vest, and a full-length zipper. It all adds up to a handsome garment, and the Thinsulate makes the vest useful even when you're off the bike.

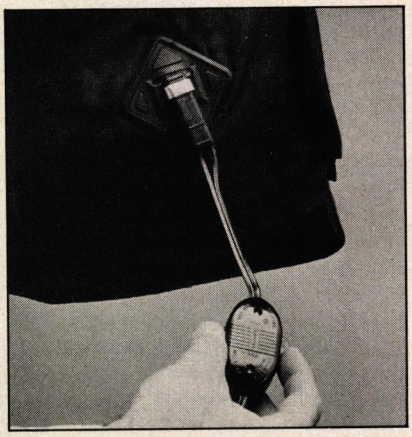
It's when you're *on* the bike, though, that the vest's worth really becomes apparent. Hooking up the wiring is a simple task, and takes only a few minutes. But it takes less time than that before you feel the warmth flooding over your chest and back; the vest heats quickly and evenly, with no hot spots. Eclipse recommends wearing only a medium-weight shirt underneath—to prevent insulating you from the heat—and, in conjunction with a heavy jacket, the vest keeps your upper body gloriously warm even if the mercury dips into the 30s. And if the temperature plunges lower, the mere addition of a sweater can make you feel toasty again.

Such warmth isn't completely without shortcomings, however. For instance, if the weather warms unexpectedly, the vest can become too toasty, although that's easily remedied by turning it off. Yet that reveals another minor problem; it's difficult to tell—by appearance, anyway—whether the switch is on or off.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

Eclipse vest does what conventional cold-weather gear can't

It makes you happy to be hot under the collar.



That amounts to mere nitpicking, though, especially considering the vest's virtues. A ride in cold weather can take on the aspects of a forced march; Eclipse's Electric Vest can transform the experience and make it enjoyable.

The Eclipse Electric Vest is available from motorcycle dealers, or from Eclipse Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 7370, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107; (800) 521-3092. Sizes range from XS to XXL, and the suggested retail price is $89.95. Options include a thermostat cord ($19.95), a Y-adaptor ($5.95) to hook up two vests, and an adaptor to allow plugging into a cigarette lighter. No matter how you hook the vest up, though, it's a sure way to straight-arm the cold demon.

—Charles Everitt

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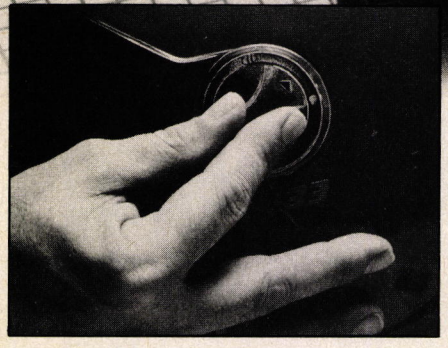
these special features on any other motorcycle helmet.



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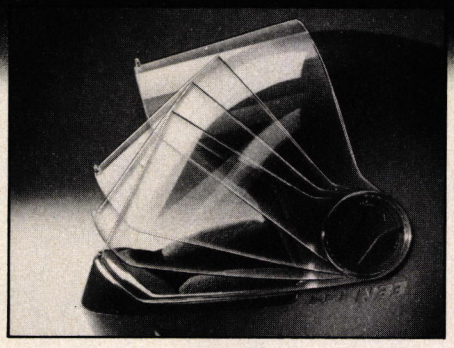
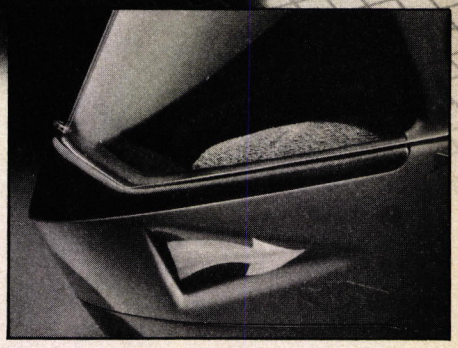


Double Spring Action

This unique feature adds extra convenience and comfort to the Nolan N33. Positive pressure at the Visor Pivot Mechanism provides smooth action allowing you to easily lock the visor into three open positions, and closed.



Venturi Ventilation System

This breathtaking feature creates a vacuum outside the helmet, drawing out stale interior air and moisture while fresh air is drawn in... greatly reducing fogging. The NASA designed airducts complement the N33's aggressive styling.

So... there are still some things money can't buy in any other helmet, they are part of the complete N33 package of great features. *Need we say more?*

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To say that a lot of motorcyclists will be looking at the new Harleys this year is probably one of the world's greatest understatements.

Everybody looks at a new Harley. Every time a new Harley passes by.

It is, without question, the masterwork of American styling. As quickly as the image bounces off the back of your eyeballs, it thumps something deep in your brain. That's the difference between genuine American styling and the "American-style" motorcycles. That's the beauty of a Harley.

But the beauty of this new FXRS Low Glide™ goes even deeper than the soul of the machine. This is the motorcycle that's turning heads and keeping them turned. This is the Harley that's turning

A HARLEY COULD ALW
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around the way American riders think.

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ROAD TEST:

Kawasaki Ninja 600R

A smaller sword with a sharper edge.

BY PAUL VAN ZUYLE

When Kawasaki's 900 Ninja burst on the scene last year, it became an instant rallying point for hard-core sporting riders. The Ninja's 16-valve, liquid-cooled transverse-four engine provided thrilling acceleration, and its chassis rivaled a racebike's for taut, confidence-inspiring feel. Even more important, though, the Ninja re-established Kawasaki as a leading manufacturer of high-performance big-bore sportbikes, a title the company was in danger of losing

by keeping its aging GPz1100.

Kawasaki was in danger of slipping into the same position in the middleweight class, too. The company had refined its GPz550 through the years, but the other Japanese manufacturers were building fresh, new hardware that threatened to make the GPz obsolete. So Kawasaki applied the Ninja formula to a new middleweight wrist-rocket, and produced the Ninja 600R

And the Ninja 600R, like its 900 namesake, is a no-holds-barred statement of sportbike performance. But monikers aside, the 600 Ninja is *not* a scaled down version of last year's 900. Whereas the 900 was designed from the outset to be a completely new superbike, the 600R borrows heavily from the GPz550, and for good reason. Using existing pieces shortened development time and reduced production costs, and allowed Kawasaki to get the bike to the marketplace that much sooner.

For starters, the 600 uses most of the GPz's bottom end, retaining the 550's rubber front engine-mounts, piston stroke, intermediate-shaft primary drive, transmission, and cam-chain drive up the center of the engine. Kawasaki didn't just rob from the GPz's parts bin to create the 600, though. Compared to the GPz, the 600's bore centers for cylinders two and three are 1mm closer together, with corresponding changes in main-bearing locations and crankshaft journals. Plus, the

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © DAVID DEWHURST

600R's Ninja parentage shows up in fast cornering

Holding tight to the family line.

600 has a numerically lower primary drive ratio, which makes its clutch spin faster than the 550's, thus reducing its load, which permitted using the GPz's clutch for the 600. Further, the 600's crank-mounted alternator is thinner than the 550's, and its engine cases are more compact, too.

It's from the cylinder's base gasket on up, though, that the GPz resemblance ends, and the Ninja connection begins. Both Ninja engines, for instance, have liquid-cooled top ends with wet liners, 11.0:1 compression ratios and four valves per cylinder, with screw-and-locknut adjusters. By necessity, the smaller engine has smaller-diameter valves than the 900, and the 600R's cams offer both shorter duration and less lift. In addition, the 600's valves are set at a 36.5-degree included angle, compared to the 900's 34.9-degree angle.

The 600's Keihin carburetors also are smaller than the 900's (32mm vs. 34mm) mixers, but they share the same semi-flat-slide design. Kawasaki claims the carbs' design promotes quicker throttle response, and is worth 2-3 horsepower compared to conventional round-slide mixers. Unfortunately, the 600's Keihins don't work as well as the 900's. The 600 takes an aggravatingly long time to warm up, and even when it's finally up to operating temperature, the motor doesn't carburet particularly well below 6000 rpm. The bike is overly sensitive to small throttle openings, making it difficult to make smooth progress in slow-speed situations. Wind the motor up past 6000 rpm, though, and throttle response becomes crisp and immediate.

Spinning the 600R's motor up into the midrange and beyond also reveals its wealth of power. The little Ninja has good low-end performance, to be sure, but the *real* power lies further up the rev-band. In fact, the 600 pulls like a full-sized 750. Its power builds in a linear fashion, smoothly and predictably, right past its 11,000-rpm redline until the ignition-system rev limiter cuts in at about 13,000 rpm. And, just to show how much power the Ninja has, look at this: It turned a 12.124-second quarter-mile at 109.09 mph, and has a top speed of 135 mph. That makes the 600 the absolute king of the American middleweight class, as far as speed and quickness are concerned, handily smoking the nearest competitor, Yamaha's FJ600. And unlike the Yamaha, the 600R is superbly smooth, with almost no perceptible vibration reaching the rider.

To help put all that class-leading horsepower to the ground, the Ninja has a new frame that's completely unlike other Kawasaki production-bike frames, including the 900 Ninja's. Where the 900 uses a combination of round steel tubing, box-section aluminum tubing and cast-aluminum plates, the 600 uses box-section steel tubing almost exclusively. Moreover, the 600's design has no central backbone; instead, a large rectangular tube wraps around both sides of the motor, and runs straight back from the steering head to the swingarm pivot. It's a design that's common to GP racebikes, and a major contributor to the Ninja's remarkable handling.

And make no mistake; the 600R handles extraordinarily well. The bike steers with a precision that belies its true identity as a streetbike, and is wonderfully stable at speed. Like the 900 Ninja, though, the 600 requires a deliberate effort at the handlebars to make quick directional changes. Kawasaki did equip the 600R with 16-inch wheels front and rear, and the bike has relatively quick steering geometry, but it also has the longest wheelbase in its class, and at 448 pounds, it's also the heaviest. As a result, the 600's steering, although neutral and precise, is a bit slow, especially compared to the class speedball, Honda's VF500F Interceptor. Even so, the little Ninja inspires great confidence during fast trips down winding roads, and its nearly limitless cornering clearance means you can crank it over to almost unbelievable lean angles.

The Ninja's brakes inspire similar confidence, too. Although the 600 has GPz550-issue calipers, it also has 10mm-larger rotors in front, and pads of a different composition from that used on previous Kawasakis. The result is dramatically good stopping power; one finger can make the front tire howl, yet the brakes are easily controlled. The 600's front brake also is plumbed into a hydraulically actuated anti-dive system that *works*. Even when set at the lowest of its three adjustments, the anti-dive's effect is apparent, especially if you snap the brakes on hard.

Complementing the anti-dive's function on the Ninja is Kawasaki's Automatic Variable Damping System (AVDS), a feature the bike shares with the 900 Ninja. AVDS increases the compression damping in the 600's Kayaba air-fork by way of a valve in each fork leg; the system works in response both to the speed and distance of fork-slider move-

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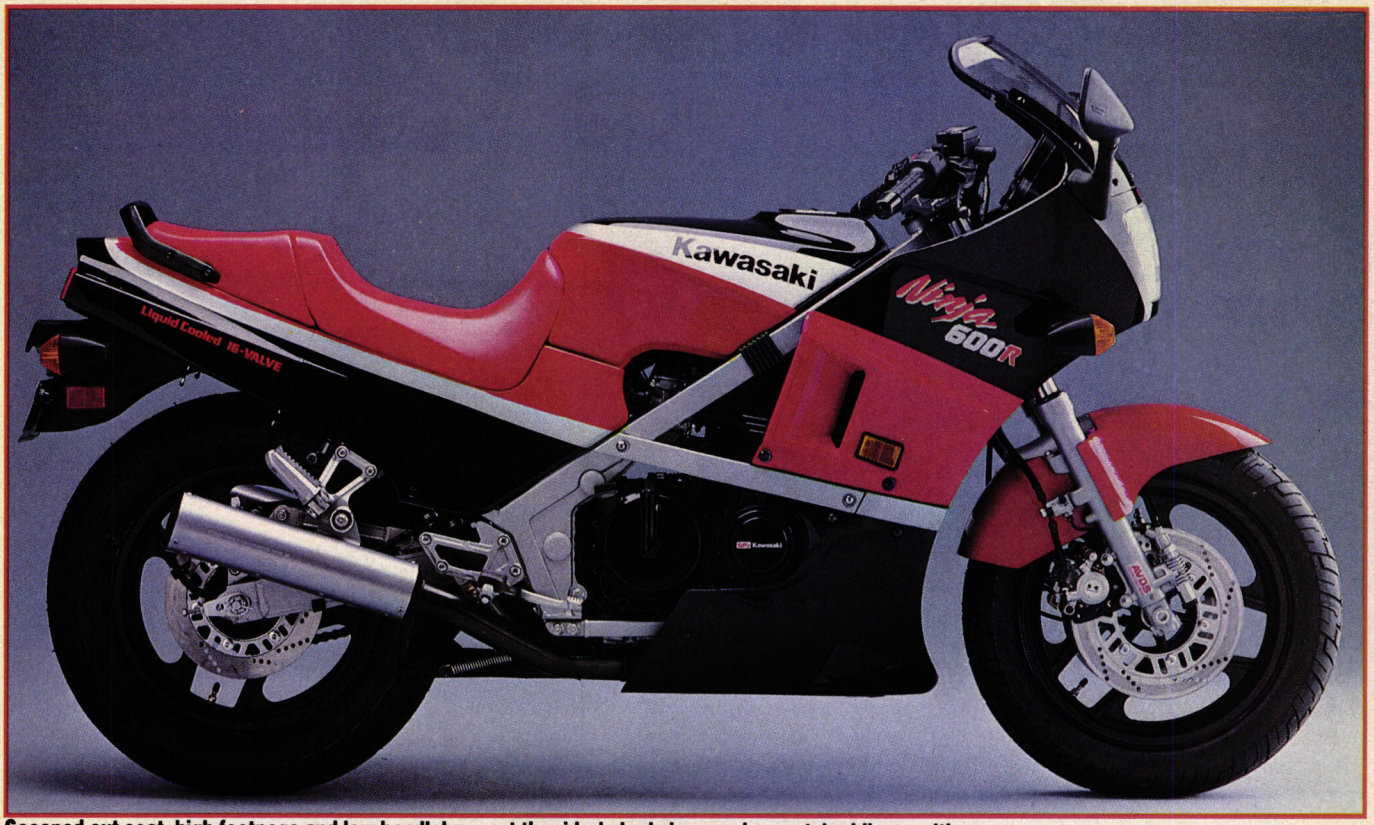
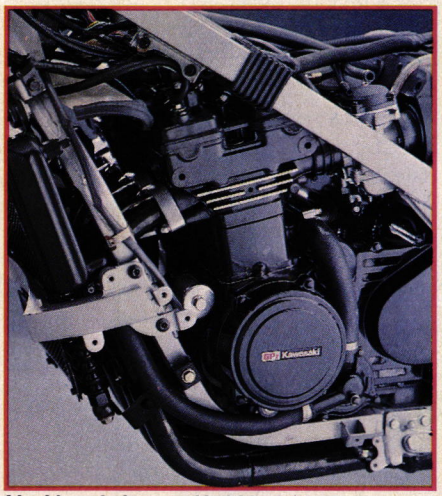


Scooped-out seat, high footpegs and low handlebars put the rider's body in a roadrace-style riding position

Razor-sharp handling, stiff suspension and lots of top-end power add to the 600R's racy nature.

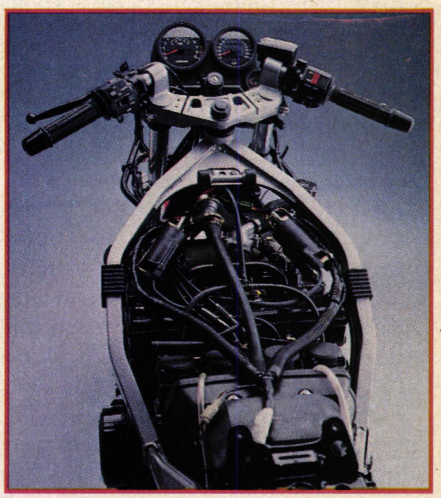
Instruments and gas cap look familiar

They're nearly identical to the 900's.



Liquid-cooled top end is 900 trickle-down

But bottom end is based on the GPz550.

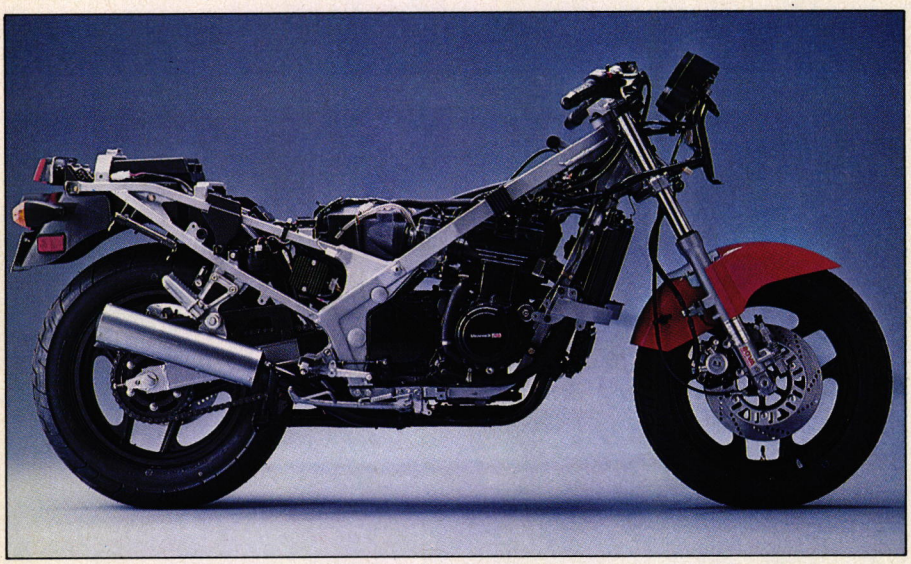


Frame tubes pass around cylinder head

GP-style frame for GP-style handling.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'85	12.124/109.09	135	448	135
Kawasaki GPz550-'85	12.478/104.89	121	432	137
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	12.484/106.00	126	419	123
Suzuki GS550ES-'84	12.675/103.68	123	444	137
Yamaha FJ600-'84	12.468/105.63	126	435	129
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	12.114/110.97	135	502	120



Ninja 600R is a study in aircraft-style dense packaging

And a naked display of motorcycle high technology.

ment, and includes a blow-off mechanism that reduces the compression damping over sharp bumps. In back, the 600 employs Kawasaki's rising-rate Uni-Trak setup, and the single Kayaba shock adjusts both for air pressure and rebound damping.

And the performance offered by the Ninja's suspension makes for a stable platform at speed. Kawasaki recommends a range of 7.1-10.0 psi in the fork, and 0 psi in the rear. And with 7 psi in the fork, 0 psi in the shock and the shock set to No. 4 (of four) rebound-damping position, for a 140-pound rider the Ninja displays excellent composure on curving backroads. The bike stays stable and secure even when you're charging hard. That is, up to the onset of shock fade; hard riding causes the shock's rebound damping to deteriorate, resulting in a slight wallow in high-speed corners.

The Ninja 600's suspension also provides a stiff-legged ride for normal daily riding. Both ends of the bike feel too stiffly sprung for commuting or freeway work, even when set at minimum air pressures and No. 1 rebound damping for the shock. The result is a harsh ride whenever the road surface is less than billiard-table smooth.

Adding to a Ninja rider's discomfort in day-in/day-out riding is a seating position that would do justice to a Grand Prix racebike. For instance, Kawasaki mounted the Ninja's footpegs extremely high, and while their position is in part responsible for the bike's tremendous cornering clearance, they also cause the pilots' legs to be bent at an extreme angle, which can cause cramping, even for short-legged riders. Plus, the 600R's saddle is racebike-hard and limits the rider essentially to one position. What's more, a rider has to support much of his upper body weight on his wrists, something else that becomes uncomfortable in short order. In fairness, though, the Ninja wasn't conceived as a knock-around commuter, and its racy ergonomics perfectly suit the bike's true purpose.

And that purpose becomes clear even after a casual ride on the Ninja 600R. Kawasaki built this motorcycle to blast around corners, just as hard and fast as its rider dares. That is its realm of expertise, and in it the bike simply excels. True, the 600R is a narrow-focus motorcycle—even when compared to other sportbikes, including Kawasaki's own 900 Ninja—and requires a certain commitment from its rider. But even a rider who is less than totally committed can appreciate the Ninja's smooth power delivery and its superior handling and stability at speed. Still, the 600R, like its 900 namesake, means something more: It marks Kawasaki's resurgence in a class in which its superiority was fading. And to that we say, "Welcome back." ●

Nits:

- Clutch cable obscures fuel gauge.
- Screwdriver needed to remove sidecover, in order to gain access to shock adjustments.
- Mirrors offer an insufficient view of the area directly behind the bike.

Picks:

- Convenient bungee cord hooks fold out below passenger seat.
- Radiator reservoir is located in cowling, makes reservoir easy to check and fill.
- Four-way warning flashers.

Ride Review

- Kawasaki had better tighten up its in-house security: Somebody surely meddled with the Ninja 600R's blueprints during its development. Kawasaki might claim the most recent Ninja is a streetbike, but it's wrong. I know it's a racer that just happens to be street-legal.

And I'm convinced of that every time I ride the 600R, in part because it makes me *feel* like a racer. Plus, the Ninja projects the personality of a roadracing machine, and every time I settle into its contoured saddle, I know I'm riding something that's more than an ordinary sportbike. All of which supports my suspicions that a clandestine culprit, performing like the Ninjas of centuries ago, tampered with the 600R's plans. But that's OK; the outcome is the best racebike I've ever ridden on the street.

—Dain Gingerelli

- Kawasaki's Ninja formula—at least, as applied to the 900 version—didn't make sense to me; the 900 came on like a 500 that had spent too much time in the gym. With it's top-weighted powerband and slow steering, the bike felt quick, yet musclebound, and riding it fast took on the aspects of a full-blown workout. Not my ideal setup for a big-bore sportbike.

So why is it that I love the little Ninja, which has an even narrower sporting focus than the 900? Easy. The 600R might have the 900's parentage, but not its shortcomings. In fact, the 600 motor actually has a wider powerband than the 900, and the bike weighs less, too, which makes it a joy—not a chore—to blast through twisties. Like I said, I didn't understand the Ninja formula before, but with the 600R it makes perfect sense.

— Charles Everitt

- Even if someone stripped off all the Ninja's markings, I'd have no problem identifying it as a Kawasaki. You see, every Kawasaki sportbike since the '83 GPz750 has provided the same view in its mirrors—unless you're unduly concerned about the stitching on your jacket sleeves, those fairing-mounted units are as informative as a Swahili road sign to a New York cabbie. And when you're aboard something as willing and enticing as the 600 Ninja, what—or rather, *who*—is behind you is of paramount importance.

Only after riding the Ninja, listening to its high-pitched snarl, did the logic of those mirrors dawn on me. It's simply the old racers' adage: "Never look back, because somebody might be gaining on you." Of course, if you're on a 600R, chances are they're not gaining too fast.

—Jim Miller

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Kawasaki Ninja 600R — street

IMPORTER: Kawasaki Motors Corp., 2009 East Edinger Ave., Santa Ana, California 92711

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $3299

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 60.0mm x 52.4mm
Displacement 592.6cc
Compression ratio 11.0:1
Engine redline . . . . . 11,000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 32mm Keihin semi-flat-slide constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 280-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 12-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Crankshaft-to-jackshaft drive . . . . . inverted-tooth chain; 1.174:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-transmission drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 2.250:1 ratio
Final drive . . . . . #530 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 2.600:1 (39/15) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.571	17.657	4.18
II	1.778	12.211	6.05
III	1.381	9.485	7.79
IV	1.125	7.726	9.56
V	0.962	6.607	11.18
VI	0.852	5.851	12.62

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Kayaba air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter, 3-position adjustable brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/4.7 in. (119mm)
Rear . . . . . single Kayaba air-spring shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping/4.3 in. (110mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.5-in. (266mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . single-action hydraulic caliper, 9.8-in. (248mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 110/90V16 Dunlop K825A tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/90V16 Dunlop K825 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 448 lbs. (203.2kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 49.1% front, 50.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 882 lbs. (400kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 404 lbs. (183kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 56.3 to 57.6 in. (1429 to 1462mm)
Seat height . . . . . 30.3 in. (769mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 26.8 in. (680mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 14.3 in. (364mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.0 in. (152mm), at fairing
Steering head angle . . . . . 27.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 3.82 in. (97mm)
Frame . . . . . box-section and tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.2 qt. (3.0/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 5.0 gal. (18.9/), including 0.5 gal. (1.9/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, voltmeter, fuel gauge, coolant temperature gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 44 to 54 mpg (19 to 23 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 49 mpg (21 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 220 to 270 miles (354 to 435km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 22 to 27 miles (35 to 43km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 30 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 51 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 12.124 sec., 109.09 mph (176 km/h)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 135 mph (217 km/h)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 32 ft. (9.8m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 135 ft. (41.1m)

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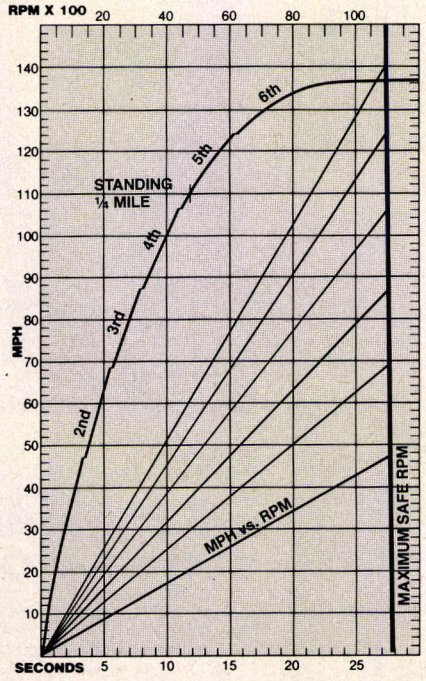

All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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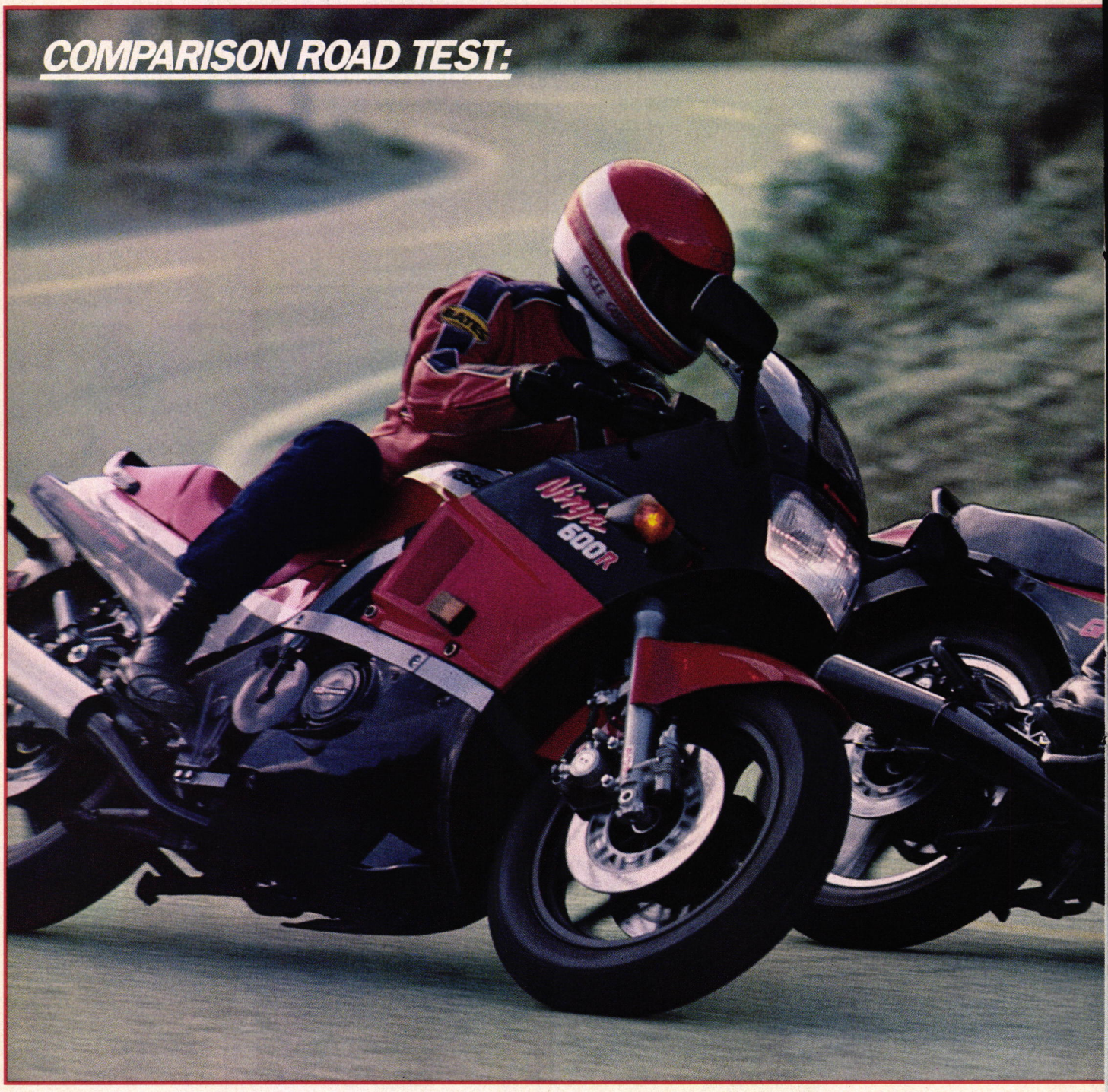


PHOTOGRAPHY © DAVID DEWHURST

Kawasaki GPz550 vs. Kawasaki Ninja 600R

Is the GPz550 strong enough to survive a Ninja's attack?

• When all the dust has settled after the sportbike introductions for 1985, there will be one very familiar fairing left in the crowd: The one belonging to Kawasaki's GPz550, a bike that's practically unchanged this year except for new graphics. But if the GPz's inclusion in Kawasaki's '85 lineup seems strange, in light of the Ninja 600R's presence, consider this: The GPz is the bike that made Kawasaki *the* force to be reckoned with in the middleweight sportbike class. And, despite being attacked on all fronts by the other Japanese manufacturers, the GPz's versatility has kept it near the top of the sporting-middleweight class. Now, though, the question becomes: Can the 550 defend itself from a sneak attack from the Ninja, its own family member?

If you base your answer on a glance through the specs pages of these two bikes, the answer would seem to be a resounding "No," because a comparison of the two motorcycles makes the GPz seem like a showcase for dated technology. For example, the GPz uses a traditional single-backbone frame made of round steel tubing, whereas the 600R employs a new-tech box-section-tube frame that closely resembles current GP-bike design. Further, the 550 has 18-inch wheels front and rear, compared to the 600's 16-inchers. Both bikes have single-shock Uni-Trak rear suspensions, but the Ninja's front fork features Kawasaki's AVDS system that increases compression damping in response to both the speed and position of the fork sliders.

Underscoring the technological gulf even more are the two engine's top-end designs. The 550 uses an air-cooled two-valve-per-cylinder layout that looks decidedly old hat when stacked up against the 600R's liquid-cooled, four-valve setup. Those differences—along with 5mm-larger carburetors and 39cc more displacement—translate into superior power for the Ninja at almost any rpm. At the dragstrip, the GPz gets left lagging in the 600R's wake, turning a 12.478-second/104.89-mph quarter-mile to the Ninja's 12.124/109.09 run. The Ninja has better power where it counts, too, out on the road in the real world, away from the dragstrip. Not only does the 600 have a stouter top-end punch, it has significantly more midrange; in top-gear roll-ons from 55 mph, the Ninja easily pulls away from the GPz, and the 550 keeps up only if downshifted to fifth gear. In addition, the 600 has the upper hand in powerband width. The Ninja's power crescendos evenly from idle to its 11,000-rpm redline, while the GPz feels more high-strung and peaky, and gains considerable power as its tach needle swings past 7000 rpm.

But the Ninja doesn't hold all the aces. The 550 shifts more smoothly than the 600, and the GPz has better throttle response at low rpm, as well, enabling its rider to dial in just the right amount of power, whether it's in slow corners on winding backroads, or in tight traffic in town. Contrarily, the Ninja's carburetion forces its rider to work around its abrupt low-rpm throttle response.

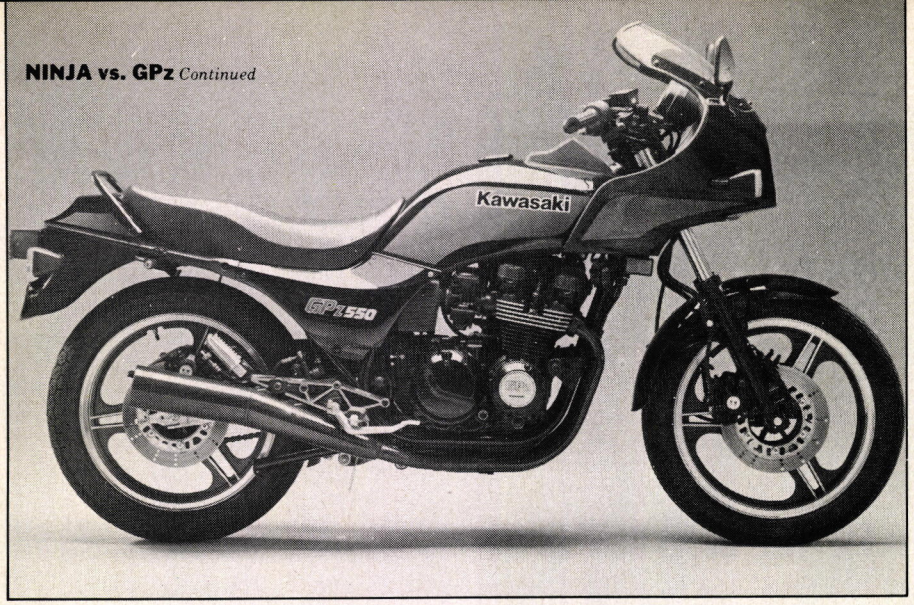
In handling, though, the road-warrior Ninja scores a clear victory over its sibling. True, the GPz handles capably, and it even steers more quickly than the 600R, in part due to the 550's combination of lighter weight, shorter wheelbase, steeper steering head angle and shorter trail. Quick steering isn't the only criterion for good handling, though. At near racing speeds, the GPz's responsiveness becomes a liability, making the bike feel nervous and oversensitive. Plus, the GPz lacks the Ninja's stability at frantic levels of backroad rushing. There, the Ninja remains rock-solid, and the GPz transmits a vague, rubbery sensation to its rider. In cornering clearance, as well, the 600R comes out on top, because at comparable lean angles, the 550's pegs are dragging long before anything on the 600 is even

Continued

KAWASAKI GPz550

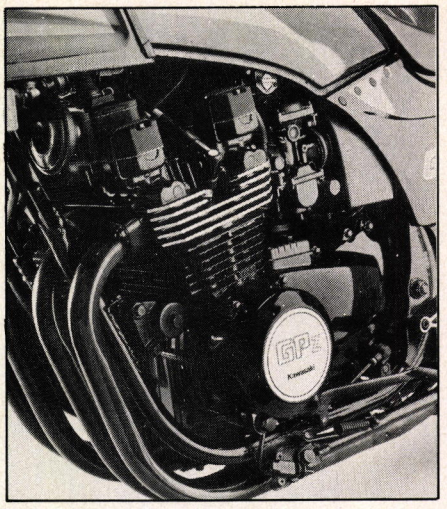
Importer: Kawasaki Motors Corp.
2009 East Edinger Ave.
Santa Ana, California 92711

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$2899
Engine type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke	58.0mm x 52.4mm
Displacement	553.8cc
Compression ratio	10.0:1
Carburetion	four 27mm Teikei Kikaki constant-vacuum
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Showa air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter, brake-actuated hydraulic anti-dive/5.1 in. (129mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	single Showa shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 17mm spring preload range/ 4.5 in. (114mm)
Wheelbase	55.8 to 57.2 in. (1417 to 1453mm)
Seat height	31.0 in. (784mm)
Weight	432 lbs. (196.0kg)
Steering head angle	26.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.74 in. (95mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.478 sec.,104.89 mph
Top speed (observed)	121 mph (195 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	137 ft. (41.8m)
Fuel consumption	40 to 48 mpg (17 to 20 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	red-and-black; silver-and-red



GPz's well-rounded performance made it the class act of the middleweight class

This year, though, it's being upstaged by its upstart bigger brother.



550 motor enters it fifth year

But it's no match for a newborn Ninja.

close to touching down.

An advantage in canyon cornering is something the GPz practically concedes to the Ninja, though. After all, the 600R was purpose-built to be the new middleweight sportbike king. But in attaining that lofty goal, Kawasaki drastically narrowed the Ninja's focus—and its versatility. As a result, in almost every comparison involving rider comfort, the GPz makes the Ninja seem uncomfortable and ill-considered. The 550, for example, rides much more smoothly than the 600, particularly over expansion joints and other paving irregularities; in contrast, the 600 serves up a harsh, unyielding ride. And the GPz's ergonomics are far better suited to everyday riding than the Ninja's. The 550's lower footpegs and higher handlebars offer a much roomier riding position than do the Ninja's pegs and bars, and the GPz's flatter seat allows the rider to change position more easily than is the case with the 600R's saddle.

Changing position is something the GPz will have to do, too, now that it's competing with the Ninja. Certainly, the Ninja 600R is the better choice for a backroad weapon, but that's its very *raison d'etre,* and it sacrifices a sizable measure of rider comfort for its sporting expertise. The GPz, on the other hand, trades off some of its sporting prowess in exchange for a versatility the Ninja cannot match. That versatility is what's kept the GPz near the top of the middleweight class, and it's what makes the 550 a winner today. —*Paul Van Zuyle*

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Bates Nylon Touring Suit

Suitable ammunition for the cold wars.

• One of a rider's greatest pleasures is feeling in tune with the elements—as long as it's a warm, gloriously sunny day. But when the thermometer plunges to bone-chilling temperatures, you can preserve the joy of riding by climbing into heat-conserving cold-weather gear, such as Bates' two-piece Nylon Touring Suit.

Both the jacket ($135.00) and bib overalls ($110.00) are constructed of 5-ounce nylon, closely woven for wind resistance, and each garment is piped with Scotchlite reflective trim. And to provide a measure of rain protection, the nylon's inner surface is coated with Du Pont Zepel. It's warmth, though, that's the key to this riding suit, and to that end the overalls and jacket—even the collar—are stuffed with 3M Thinsulate, a material 3M says provides insulation equal to other, bulkier synthetic fibers. What's more, a non-quilted design helps keep cold air out by minimizing the number of needle holes.

Plus, the suit has other features that show considerable attention to preventing the loss of body heat. For instance, a Velcro-secured storm flap covers the jacket's full-length, two-way zipper, and the snap-down collar unfolds to provide full neck coverage, snugging around the throat with two Velcro straps. In addition, the jacket's recessed, knitted inner cuffs provide an initial cold-air seal, and the outer cuffs secure around the wrists with Velcro tabs. And to keep drafts from blowing up underneath the jacket, an adjustable belt with a Fastex buckle cinches around the waist. Similar thermal efficiency is designed into the overalls, too: Detachable, elastic stirrups keep the legs from riding up, and angled Velcro straps prevent cold air from sneaking up your ankles.

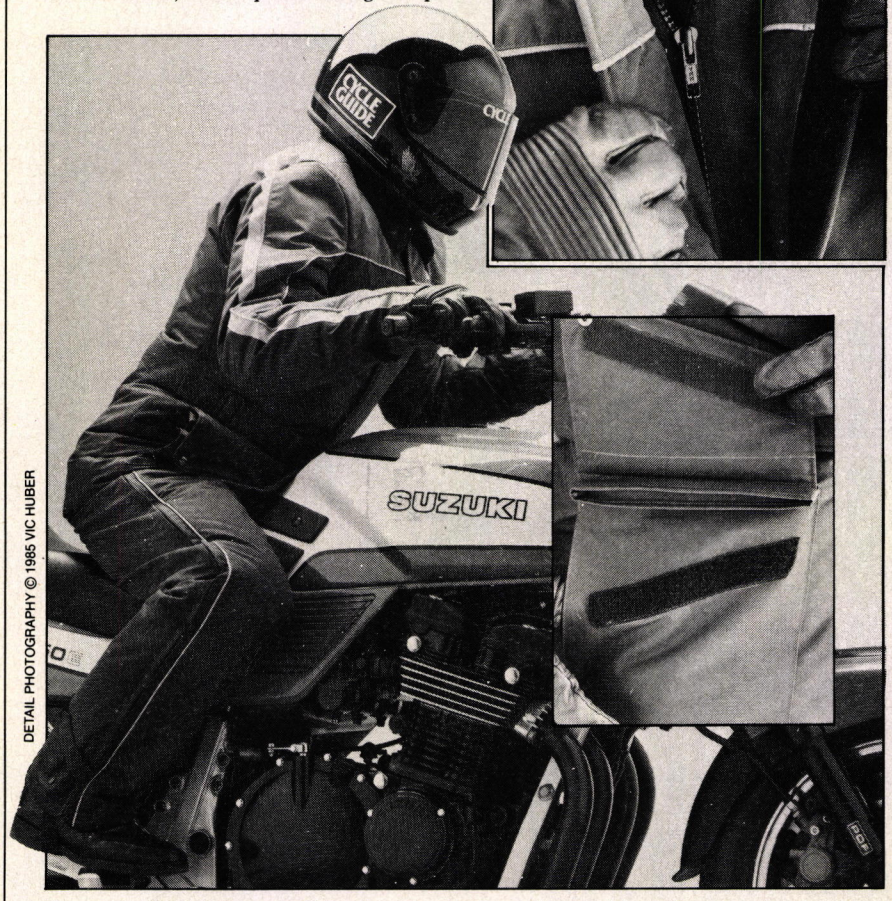
Bates also designed the suit with rider convenience in mind. Bates' overalls have three full-length, two-way zippers—one on the outside of each leg, covering a storm flap, and one in front on the torso—making them easy to get on and off. The suit provides plenty of storage space, as well. The jacket has two inside vest pockets, two outside pockets with handwarmer slits behind them, and the overalls have a large pocket on the left leg. All of the exterior pockets secure with Velcro, and have storm flaps underneath the large main flaps. Other important features include the jacket's one-piece arm-and-back construction, which is curved to suit a normal riding position, and extra-long arms and legs, for full weather protection and comfort in a riding posture.

Certainly, proper fit is important, but the real test of a cold-weather suit's mettle is in how it works in conditions that would have most riders huddled in front of a fire, waiting for the thermometer to thaw out; that's when the Bates suit really comes through. Just zip the suit on over a shirt, sweater and jeans, and you'll be well-equipped to thumb your nose at Jack Frost. In less extreme conditions—say, down to 50 degrees—the jacket alone permits comfortable riding, even if you're wearing little more than a shirt and light sweater underneath. If the weather warms up even more, the jacket allows enough ventilation to keep you from roasting.

There are shortcomings, though, that keep Bates' suit from approaching perfection. The jacket cuffs' Velcro tabs are placed too high on the forearms, and cinching them causes the cuffs to bell outward, making it difficult to pull gloves over them. The suit is bulky, too, despite the use of Thinsulate, and it's only partially successful at keeping out rain. Even so, the fit is excellent for riding, and doesn't restrict movement.

Bulk and warmth, however, usually are synonymous, and if it's foul-weather protection you want, the Bates Touring Suit offers it. You can purchase men's and women's sizes of the jacket and bib overalls—which come in navy/rust/yellow—directly from Bates Industries Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 240 GP, Long Beach, California 90801. Because you never know when you'll need a good riding companion to zip into.

—David Mallet



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Bates' Touring Suit features Thinsulate, double storm flaps and deep-flap pockets

All designed to provide shelter from the storm.

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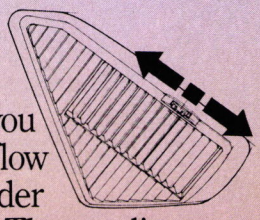
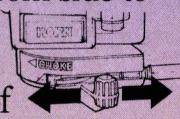
things that weren't

detachable ones on the trunk and fairing, plus a fixed one underneath the backrest—to hold your proliferating odds and ends.



Adjustable louvers (4) now let you control the flow of rear cylinder engine heat. The rear lip on the rider's seat (5) has been subtly altered to give you significantly more support. And for all you passengers out there, the backrest (6) is higher and farther back.

Even the lowly choke lever (7) now moves from side to side instead of up and down, so it can't slip out of position. While the audio system (8) has been improved for better frequency response.



Add all these little things to all the big things the Venture Royale had going for it—a revolutionary 1200cc liquid-cooled V-4, ultra-smooth shaft drive, monoshock, anti-dive, cockpit-controlled Computer Leveling Air Suspension System (C.L.A.S.S.) and cruise control, to name only six—and it looks like our engineers have come up with the perfect touring bike, at last.

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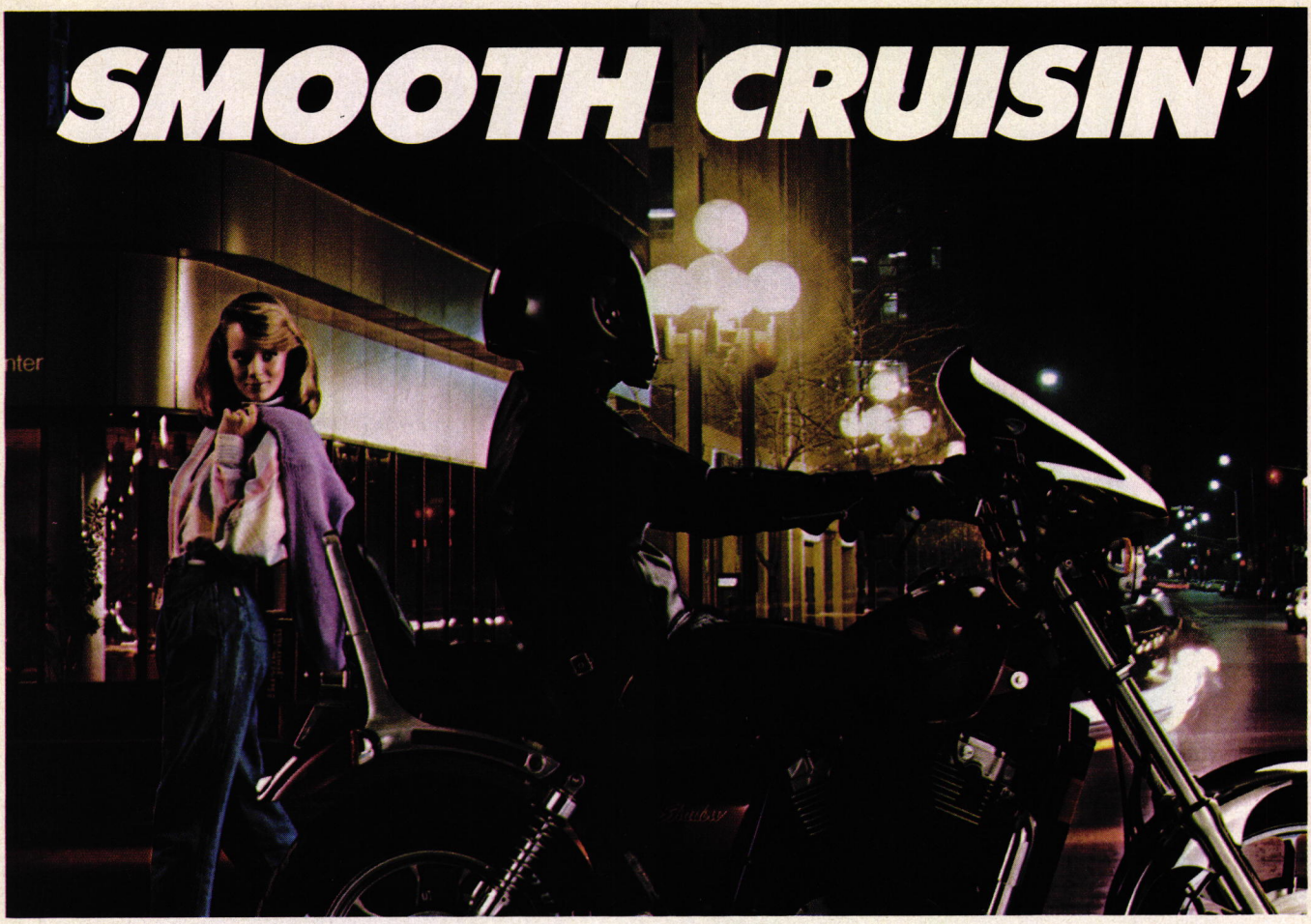

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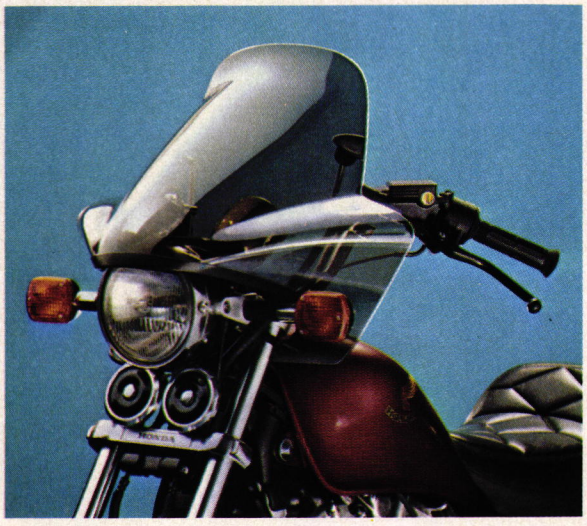

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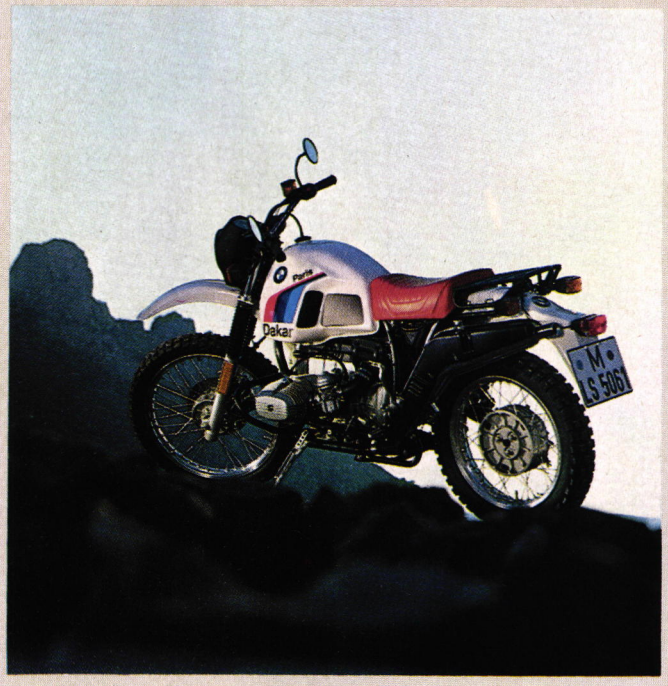
RIDE/REPORT

BMW's Paris-to-Dakar Replica

It looks the part, but don't expect it to be first at the finish.

• BMW has a repliracer for sale. For the past few years, the West German manufacturer has been almost unbeatable in the cross-Africa Paris-to-Dakar rally. BMW has chalked up one first-place finish after another in that race, despite the best efforts of some of the Japanese industry giants. Following its '84 win, BMW announced it would build a limited-production version of the factory race machine, the R80G/S Paris-Dakar.

But anyone hoping to buy an exact duplicate of BMW's 75-horsepower, 1000cc desert dueler will be sorely disappointed. The production Paris-Dakar special was held to a cosmetic facelift on a standard R80G/S. This lookalike comes with an Alpine-white, 32-liter, two-petcock tank with knee notches and a Paris-Dakar logo, a red solo seat and a luggage rack. A pair of T61 Michelin tires, along with a blacked-out exhaust system, a large-footprint sidestand and tubular cylinder-protection bars complete the list of differences between a standard R80G/S and the Paris-Dakar special. But with no changes to the engine or chassis whatsoever, quite obviously this special is no racer; rather, it's a tribute to one.



Which is exactly what BMW intended. In this country Paris-to-Dakar has a limited following. Throughout Europe, though, it's big news, and it's there the Paris-Dakar specials should move quickly—though more so in dealerships than off-road. BMW also believes there will be more European riders wanting to pretend they're Gaston Rahier, last year's winner, than there are Paris- Dakar specials to go around. So the overflow will get kits: The parts that turn a standard R80G/S into a special are offered separately. G/S owners can make the switch themselves.

But whether they turn the wrenches themselves or let the factory do it, owners of this new replica bike will be better off heading for the nearest cafe rather than the starting line. The R80G/S Paris-Dakar special might look tough and race-ready, but the looks are only skin-deep. *—Joe Kress*

Husqvarna Scrambles for Position

• Husqvarna Motorcycle Co. has expanded its racing program in the United States for 1985. For the first time, the Swedish firm will field a factory-backed team to contest the AMA National Championship Hare Scrambles Series. The team includes 1983 champ, Ed Lojak, as well as cross country specialists Kevin Hines and Mark Hyde. Husqvarna will continue its involvement in SCORE Off-Road Racing, too, maintaining the successful partnerships of Dan Ashcraft and Dan Smith, and Scot Harden and Larry Roeseler. Defending AMA National Enduro Champion Terry Cunningham leads Husky's woodsmen team, which consists of Fritz Kadlec, Mike Melton and Dave Bertram.

—Dain Gingerelli

Pfeiffer Brothers Press on Regardless

• When brothers Kent and Scott Pfeiffer rolled across the Baja 1000 finish line in Ensenada, Mexico, it only *appeared* that

Continued

they'd had an easy race to their sixth-overall, first-in-class (Class 21, 250cc) finishing position. Appearances were deceiving, though, and it was practically a miracle that their Husqvarna 250 finished at all. "Two miles out, and my engine seized on the dike road leading out of town," Kent said. The next problem belonged to Scott. "I almost had to push it over the Summit," he said. "We found it was down on water. There was a pinhole leak in the radiator, and it was leaking into the motor. We were burning everthing; gas, oil and radiator fluid." There was more, including a faulty ignition system that required a new spark plug during each pit stop. Kent added, "We had three flats and had to put in (replace) three light bulbs."

—Dain Gingerelli

Three-Wheelers in Baja

• If, for some reason, you have trouble taking ATCs seriously, then hear this. Team Honda rider Mark Weixeldorfer, along with co-riders Mike Coe and Marty Hart, not only won their class in the Baja 1000 off-road race last year, they took fourth overall, as well. What's more, they used a stock Honda ATC250 to pre-run the race, and decided to stick a radar gun in front of it, just to see how fast it would go. The result was surprising: "Mike (Coe) had his up to 89 miles per hour on the pavement," said team Honda's Weixeldorfer. *—Dain Gingerelli*

AMA Changes Supercross Format—Again

• Once again, the AMA has revised its Supercross racing format. For 1985, the alteration to motorcycle racing's most intricate elimination system focuses on the main event program. In short, the single 20-lap Main has been replaced by two 10-lap motos, each paying equal points to finishers. Furthermore, the Quarter-Finals have been dropped. Instead, the top three finishers from each of the four preliminary heats will transfer directly to the Main, while the remaining riders will get another chance to transfer in the two Semi-Mains. If they fail to make the grade in those two 10-lap rounds, they still get another opportunity in the Last Chance Qualifier. Plus, the AMA has thrown in a support race, and it features Expert Pro-Am and professional Juniors on 125cc bikes. *—Dain Gingerelli*

PRODUCT EVALUATION: Castre Warriors

Everlasts for off-road.

• It's an undeniable fact of off-road life that dirt riders need heavyweight protection for their hands. Trees, bushes and boulders can batter a rider's hands until he feels like he's gone 30 rounds with the heavy bag.

Castre's Warrior gloves can help even the odds, though, when you're duking it out on the track or trail. The Warriors feature nylon backs and gauntlets, and palms of soft leather, with a double layer of leather in the center of the palm and the web of the thumb. And, like all the gloves in Castre's line, the Warriors have a "Tri-Curve" cut, which helps them conform to the curves of your hands without bunching up.

But the Warriors' best feature is their padding. Castre uses 10 panels of ethafoam padding—the same padding used in gloves for hockey players—to cover the back of each glove from the fingertips to the wrist, and on the back of the thumb. The padding is approximately ¼-inch thick, and the separate panels give the Warriors a supremely comfortable fit, and permit excellent freedom of movement, too. What's more, if you connect with one of your sparring partners on the trail, the $29.95 price tag seems like a bargain; the gloves do their job that well.

And although the padding makes the Warriors *look* like something a heavyweight fighter could use, the gloves certainly don't *feel* that way when you're wearing them. In fact, the Warriors are cool, lightweight, durable, and, unlike a pair of Everlasts, don't require assistance to get them on or off. The terrycloth-lined gauntlets are split on one side, and fasten easily with a Velcro strap.

The Warriors come in red-and-white or blue-and-white, and in S, M, L, and XL sizes. They're available from motorcycle dealers, or from Castre Inc., Dept. CG, 836 Flory Mill Road, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17601; (717) 569-4546. The Warriors won't let you KO a tree or rock, but they will keep your hands from taking a beating out on the trail. *—Dain Gingerelli*

PRODUCT EVALUATION: AXO Superbelt

Support your local kidneys.

• To most off-road riders, kidney belts have all the glamor of underwear. Despite the fact that nearly every rider wears one, no one pays much attention to them because all belts are about the same. But AXO is out to blow that attitude into the weeds, because its Superbelt is as different from other kidney belts as a loincloth is from Fruit of the Looms.

What separates the AXO design from other belts is its back-support system and its breathable, open-mesh nylon back panel. Virtually all other kidney belts use four or five thin vertical plastic ribs to provide support and to retain the belt's shape. In contrast, the Superbelt features a reinforced web-type structure of injection-molded polyurethane ribs. That arrangement allows the AXO to offer a larger area of support than is the case with conventional belts. The result is an effective combination of flexibility and support, and a high level of comfort.

Those qualities are obvious the first time you try on the Superbelt, too. Compared to conventional belts, the AXO is noticeably more comfortable, and remains so, even on all-day rides. What's more, the mesh back panel won't make you feel like you're trapped in a sweatbox in warm weather, like other belts can. Nor is the Superbelt's comfort a flash in the pan. Almost any new kidney belt provides good support during the first few rides, but the Superbelt *retains* its initial stiffness, even after many rides and a machine washing. Plus, the AXO's dual elastic belts and Velcro fasteners remain secure, and its nylon stitching holds up well.

AXO offers the Superbelt in three sizes: Adult for 28-36-inch waist sizes ($30.95), X-Large for 36-44-inch waists ($31.95), and a scaled-down Kids Superbelt for 22-28-inch waists ($25.95). The belt is available from motorcycle dealers, or from AXO Sport-America Inc., Dept. CG, 25702 Rye Canyon Road, Suite E, Valencia, California 91355. All sizes are available in white fabric, with a choice of white, red, blue or black plastic back sections.

But the color choices are mere icing on the cake, because the *real* importance is the belt's design. AXO's Superbelt clearly represents the first significant advancement in kidney belts in almost a decade. Once you've experienced the support and comfort offered by the Superbelt, you'd sooner ride without underwear than do without it. *—George Wegner*

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

ENDURO TEST:

Husqvarna 510TE

A serious alternative from the king of enduros.

BY DAVID DEWHURST

• Despite the fact that Husky's 510TE says "Husqvarna" on its gas tank, serious enduro riders still might view the bike with some skepticism. And they can be excused for that. After all, as Husqvarna itself has proved, two-strokes are *the* way to deep-woods gold. And attempting to build a first-rate four-stroke enduro bike would seem like an exercise in futility.

But, to label the 510TE as anything less than a serious woods weapon ignores two important facts: The 510TE isn't simply a stripped-down high-tech dual-purpose bike; and, more importantly, it's made by Husqvarna, a company that knows better than any other the secrets of enduro success.

Still, not even Husqvarna is saying that the 510TE is a better enduro weapon than its own two-stroke 400WR. Instead, the TE is considered an alternative for the rider whose desire for a four-stroke is second only to his desire to win. And to reach that rider, Husky built this thumper for one task: winning races. That's why you'll not find "civilizing" features such as counterbalancers, electric starting or dual carbs on the TE. Such modern conveniences interfere with its intended purpose.

In further contrast to most current thumpers, the Husky's lower end is remarkably compact. To eliminate the bulk that's often associated with four-stroke designs, Husky's engineers started with the proven 400WR bottom end and adapted it to poppet-valve use. The entire WR six-speed drivetrain is unmodified, but it sits in new crankcases that house both the TE's larger flywheels, and a single-row roller chain to drive the single overhead camshaft.

To reduce mechanical complexity even further, Husky again drew on its two-stroke experience, and adapted the natural pumping action in the thumper's crankcases to move lubricant around inside the motor. As the piston rises, it uncovers a small port in the cylinder wall, and the low pressure caused by the rising piston draws an oil mist into the crankcase through a filter screen in the cam-chain cavity. After this oil mist lubricates the bottom end, it collects in the bottom of the crankcase, where the increasing pressure caused by the piston's downstroke forces the oil into the primary case through a reed valve. Top-end lubrication is handled by the cam chain, which drags oil from the primary case up to galleries around the cam. After lubing the top end, oil flows back down through three passages, where it is drawn through the filter screen into the cylinder, ending up back in the crankcase. The 510's RAL (Reed-Activated Lubrication) system not only provides an elegant solution to engine lubrication, it also allowed Husky to eliminate the need for a mechanical oil pump.

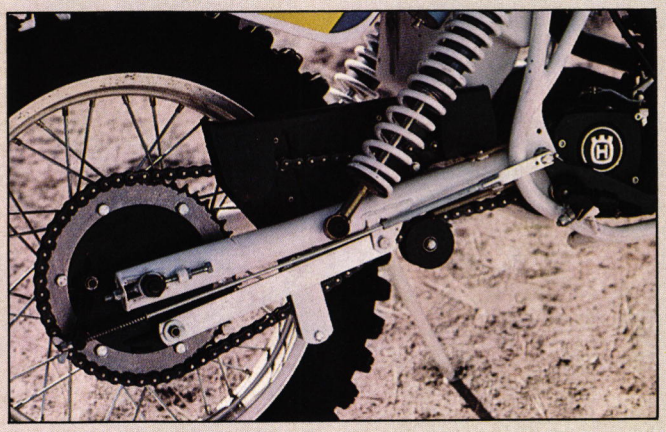
More important than the engine's mechanical simplicity, though, is the fact that the TE's motor is compact. The first time you throw a leg over the 510TE you'll think there's nothing more than a two-stroke beneath you. That is, until you try to start it. Kicking the thumper's piston past top dead center quickly reminds you that its four large valves are containing a healthy level of compression. However, even after our TE's automatic compression release broke—one of the few high-tech complications Husky added to the motor—the 510 still started well, provided you followed the correct procedure: When the engine is cold, set the enrichening lever and screw the idle adjustment in one turn for a fast idle. And hot or cold, *never* touch the throttle until the motor is running. When the ritual is followed, the 510 usually starts first kick, but if it doesn't you're in for a marathon kicking session.

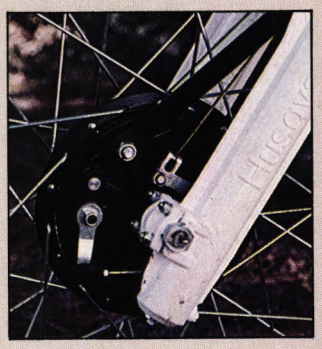
Once it's running, the Husky motor is almost flawless, too. A new 40mm Dell'Orto carb—2mm larger than the mixer on the original 510TE launched in 1983—is well jetted and allows the motor to run cleanly from idle right up to redline. And in a straight line, the 510TE feels as fast as a Honda XR600 or

Continued

Yamaha TT600. Like those two, the Husky also has plenty of power at low rpm. But, as with many four-stroke singles, the combination of extremely low rpm and a handful of throttle sometimes is more than the motor can handle. So if you suddenly slow for a rough section of trail and don't have time to downshift, the 510's engine occasionally will stall if you abruptly open the throttle again. Another four-stroke trait is the 510's large amount of flywheel inertia, which shows up during acceleration; unlike light-flywheel two-strokes, the 510 motor lacks the instant acceleration that simplifies weaving between trees. But the 510TE's ace in the hole is finding traction. You can nail the gas earlier than you can with any two-stroke around, and the TE just rockets out of turns in a controllable slide. Under the same conditions, even the predictable 400WR fishtails in search of grip.

You can also use the 510's engine braking to make up ground on two-strokes as you enter turns, but once you start cutting between the trees, the TE's advantages start to disappear. The thumper's 263 pounds start to show in tight quarters, and even though the WR and TE have identical twin-shock chassis, and both steer predictably, the four-stroke's additional 21 pounds make it more of a handful. Complicating this problem is a rear-spring rate from the WR that's a little too soft for the TE. The rear end sags down to the stiffer portion of its progressive springs, and the bike ends up with effectively reduced suspension travel. As a result, the 510's rear suspension feels less plush than that of other enduro bikes, including Honda's XR500 and the 400WR.



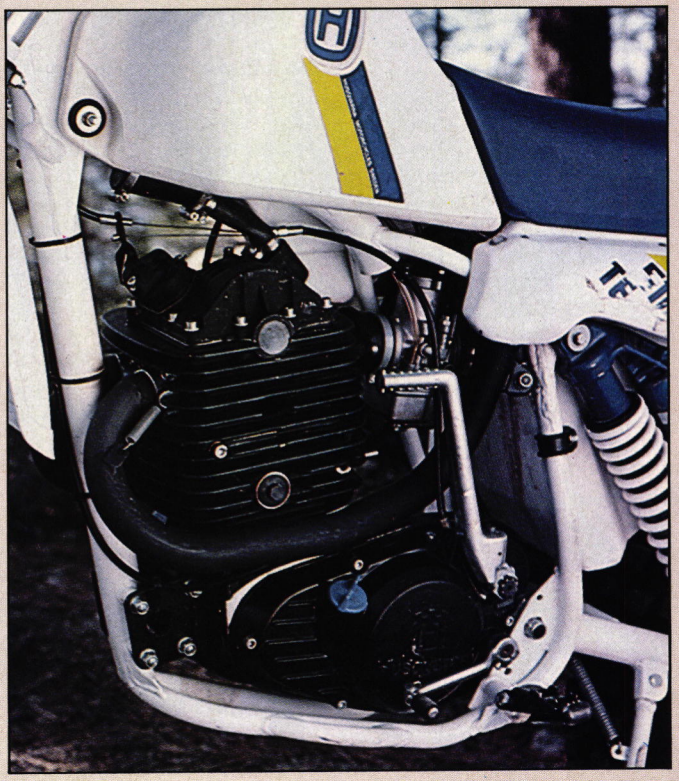


But it's not surprising that the 510TE doesn't quite match up to Husqvarna's 400WR. Nothing else, two- or four-stroke, is quite as good, either, though the TE is closer than almost anything else. As Husqvarna admits, the TE is an alternative for those who are serious about winning enduros and don't want to ride a two-stroke. We'd say that it's the *only* alternative for four-stroke woods racing. ●

HUSQVARNA 510TE

Importer: Husqvarna Motor Corp.
4935 Mercury St.
San Diego, California 92111

Category	enduro
Suggested retail price	$3195
Engine type	four-stroke vertical single
Valve arrangement	single overhead camshaft, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	91.5mm x 76.4mm
Displacement	503.7cc
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Carburetion	one 40mm Dell'Orto slide/needle
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Husqvarna air-spring, 40mm stanchion tube diameter/ 10.6 in. (270mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	dual Ohlins shocks, 10-position adjustable spring preload/ 11.9 in. (302mm)
Wheelbase	57.0 to 58.0 in. (1449 to 1474mm)
Seat height	36.7 in. (933mm)
Weight	263 lbs. (119.3kg)
Steering head angle	28.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	5.16 in. (131mm)
Top speed (observed)	98 mph (158 km/h)
Warranty	30 days on engine and frame only
Available color	white only



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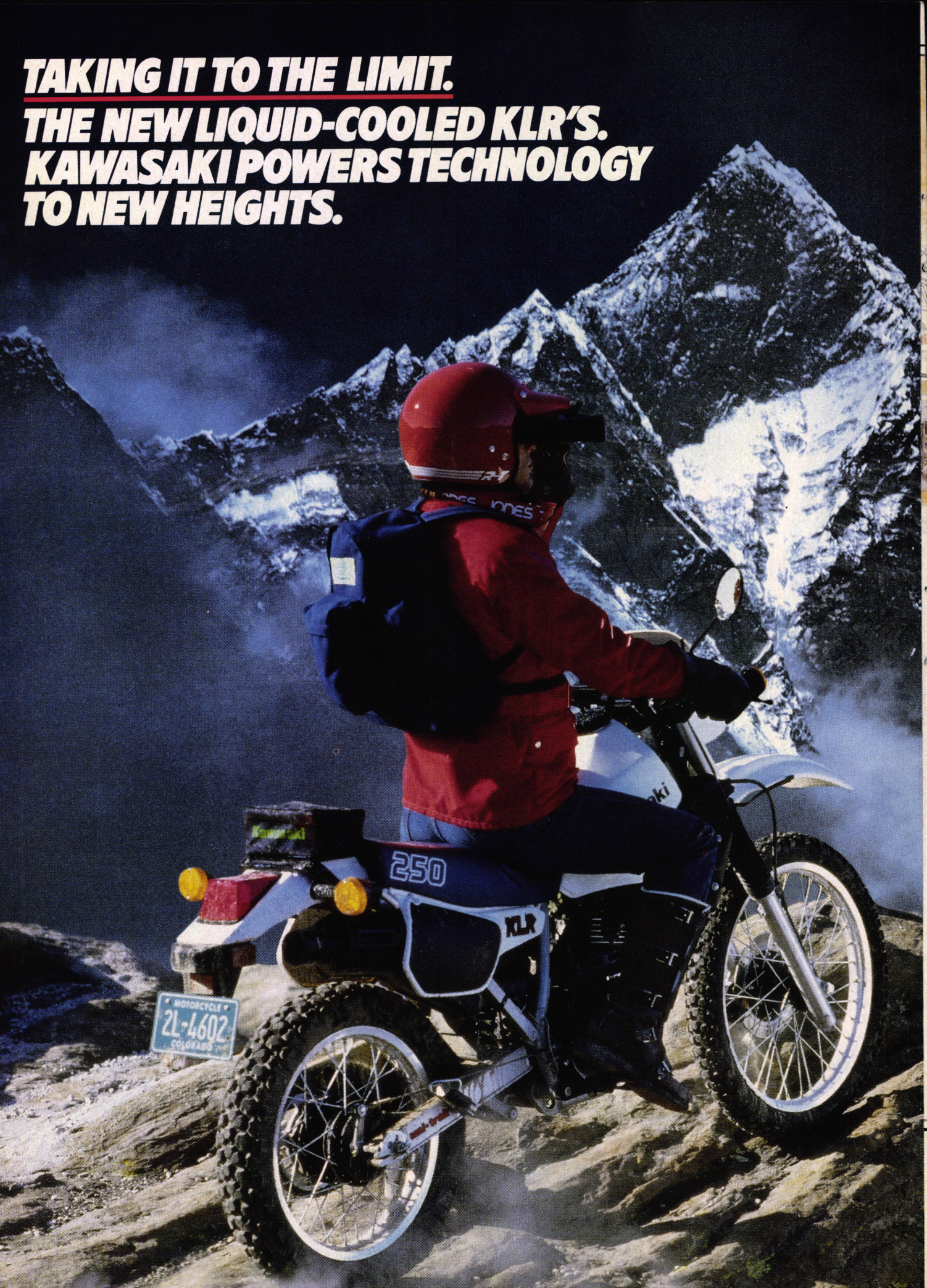
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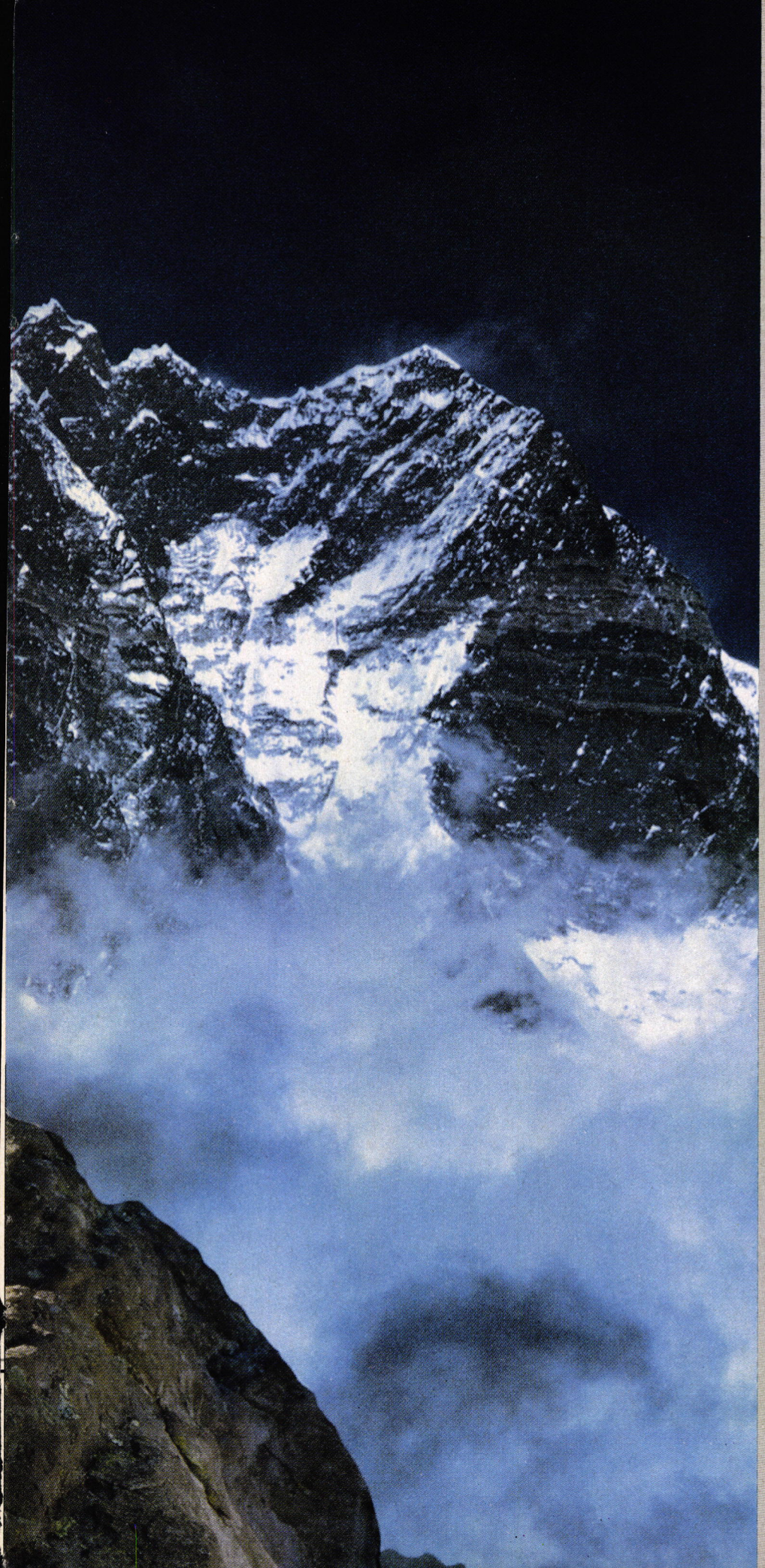

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Hondaline Elite Touring Gloves

Put a thumb into Jack Frost's eye.

• Coming to grips with cold-weather riding is difficult for a number of reasons, but one of the major problems is that your hands usually are too numb to grip *anything.* Add to the cold a bit of rain or snow and you've got two excellent reasons to go Greyhound. Instead of a bus ticket, though, you might invest in a pair of all-weather riding gloves, such as Hondaline's Elite Touring Gloves.

In the case of the Elites, that investment includes a layer of Thinsulate, which is claimed to provide double the warmth of conventional, bulkier insulating fibers. And, outside of the Thinsulate, a layer of Gore-Tex (a microporous material designed to keep liquid water out, yet allow water vapor or perspiration to escape) offers wet-weather protection. Enclosing those two materials is a dark-blue 200-denier nylon shell, accented by a gray chevron pattern across the back. Hondaline uses leather for the adjusting straps, on the palms and first two fingers, on the sides of the fingers, and in the thumb area. In addition, two swatches of suede on the left glove's index and middle fingers provide a means to clean a visor or goggles. An elastic cuff keeps the elements from sneaking up the gloves' long gauntlets, and a Velcro-adjustable strap snugs them above the wrist.

Although Hondaline's combination of materials and design might seem unconventional, the gloves do offer clemency against inclemency. First and foremost, the Elites are *cold-weather* hand protection; 40-to-50-degree weather is no problem. Admittedly, when the temperature drops below 40, the wind chill eventually creeps through to your fingers, but if you're riding behind a fairing, or if you can pull your hands out of the wind for a few moments, the Elites will keep your digits warm, even when the temperature drops into the teens. As the mercury rises, though, the gloves do their job almost too well, yet the Gore-Tex lining prevents perspiration from making your hands feel sweaty. The Gore-Tex also keeps rain from soaking through to your hands: After an hour or more, rain penetrates the nylon shell—which makes the gloves' interiors feel rather clammy—but your hands never get really *wet.* And, most important, even when the outer layer is soaked, the gloves still keep out the cold.

Although the Elite gloves fulfill their primary functions beautifully, they do have a couple of annoying shortcomings. First, the suede patches on the left glove are too short to be much use in wiping your visor, and the suede isn't nearly as absorbent as chamois. Further, the elasticized gauntlets—and the gloves' bulkiness—make them difficult to pull over jacket sleeves. Yet despite their bulk, the gloves offer good control-feel, and after an hour's worth of comfort in subfreezing temperatures, you probably couldn't care less if they had to be *stitched* on.

Getting into a pair of the Elites is a lot simpler than that, however. Hondaline's Elite Touring gloves are available through Honda dealers, in sizes S-XL, for a suggested retail price of $49.95. Consider them the hot ticket to cold-weather hand protection. —*Jim Miller*

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

Hondaline's Elite Touring gloves combine nylon, Gore-Tex and Thinsulate

A 20th Century solution to an Ice-Age dilemma.

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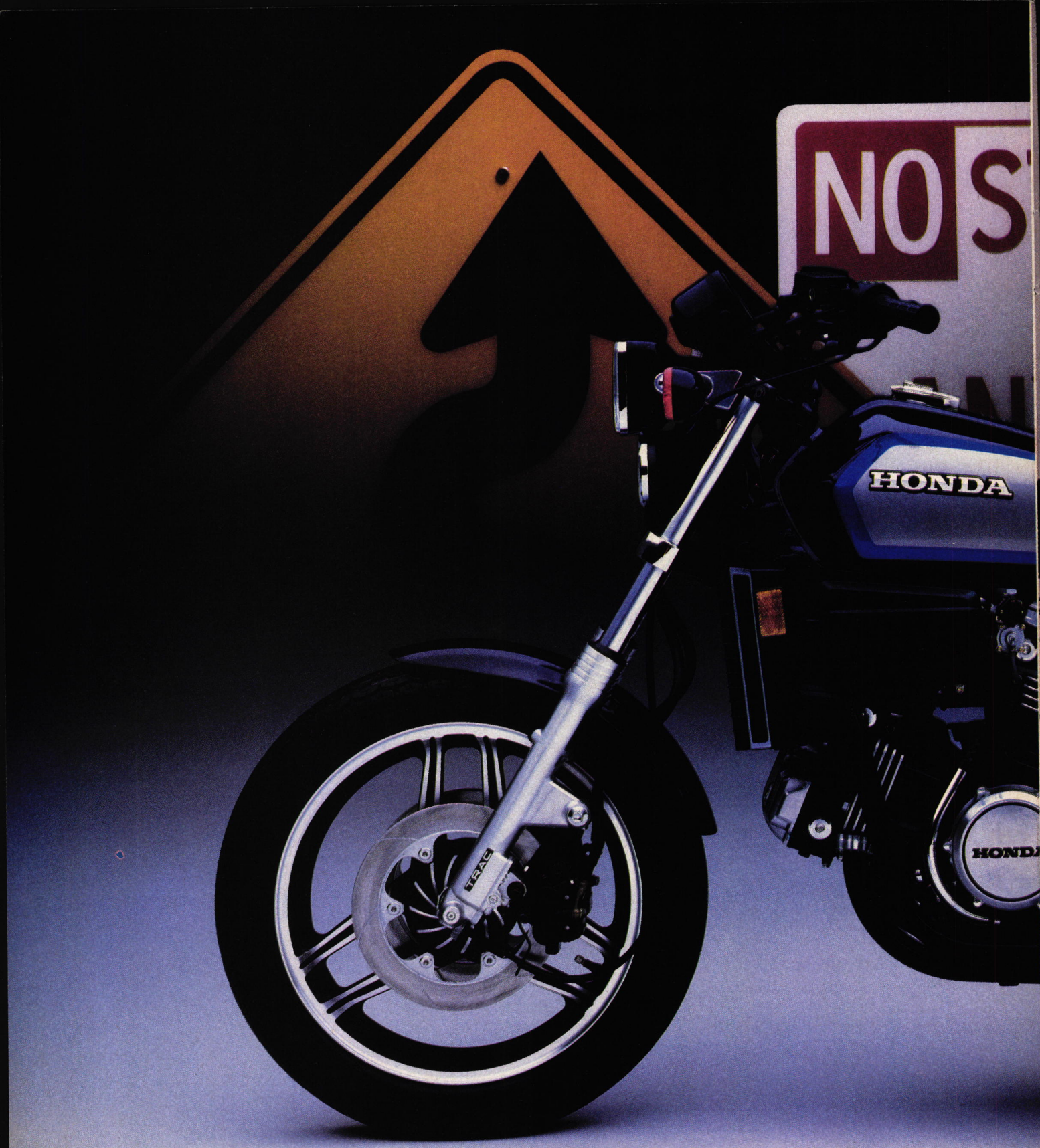

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SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

Superbike Switch

Roadracing could be heading into a new era—or into catastrophe.

• No doubt about it, Daytona International Speedway has been the scene of countless classic high-speed duels. Last March, though, spectators at the Florida track witnessed one of the most exciting battles of all time when Freddie Spencer, on his Honda NSR500, and Kenny Roberts, on his Yamaha OW69, flashdanced side by side at speeds in excess of 180 mph along the 32-degree banked turns. But as Spencer and Roberts streaked through traffic, most of the other 78 bikes in the race were performing what amounted to 50-mph versions of Michael Jackson's moonwalk. The Speedway's radar gun clocked several backmarkers running 50-mph *slower* than race-winner Roberts. The two factory flyers were that much faster.

Daytona Speedway Vice-President Jim France felt that the speed differential made for racing that was both unsafe and, to a certain extent, dull. "There were essentially only three motorcycles out there (including Eddie Lawson's OW69)," France said. And according to Daytona doctrine, which happens to be a philosophy set forth by France and his father, Bill France, owners of the race facility, three-bike races do not make a very good show.

Something had to be done to bridge the

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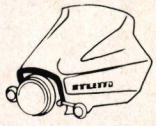

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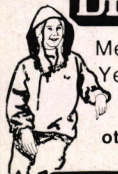

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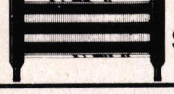

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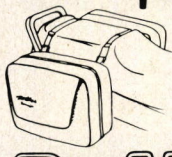

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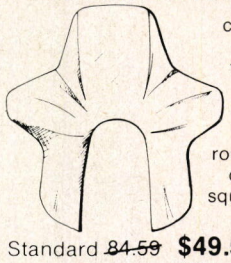

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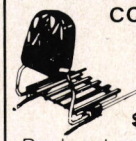

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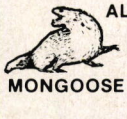

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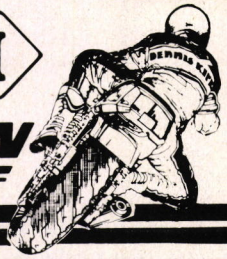

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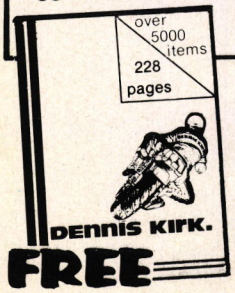

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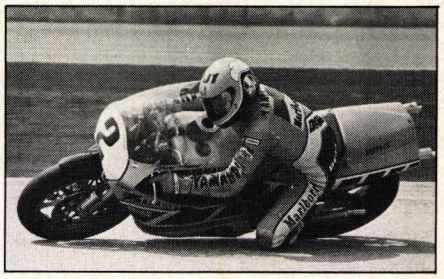
The Daytona 200 could mark the beginning of a new era in American roadracing

Superbikes just might eclipse Formula 1 as this country's premier class.

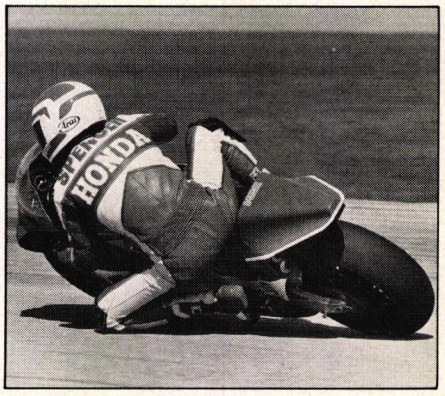
Superbike-privateer Dale Quarterly

Gearing up for the Daytona 200.



Kenny Roberts on the exotic Yamaha OW69

When a streetbike just won't do.



Honda's NSR500 isn't street-legal

Or eligible for the Daytona 200.

huge gap in speed between the factory bikes and the others—and to put on more of a show. Two days after Roberts' win, the first step was taken during the annual post-race meeting between the Frances and the AMA, sanctioning body for the Daytona event. It was at that meeting that Jim France informed the AMA as to the Speedway's intentions for 1985. Basically, the new plan included running Superbikes—instead of Formula 1 machinery—in the 1985 200-mile main event at Daytona, and reducing the F1 race to a 100-mile support feature.

France and the AMA went public with the plan last August, and it shook the racing world to its very foundation. Because on March 8, 1985, Superbikes (or streetbikes, as they're sometimes referred to by F1 elitists) will be flagged off for the start of the Daytona 200. And in the course of that race, Superbikes could be racing into history. The '85 Daytona 200 will be the inaugural event for an International Superbike Series, a worldwide "streetbike" championship, and when the green flag drops, some members of the racing fraternity believe that the future of F1 will be at stake. A favorable review at Daytona could spell success for the series—and perhaps the beginning of the end for F1.

The driving force behind the new series is M.C.C. and Associates, an organization headed by Steve McLaughlin. McLaughlin is a former racer, and his roots in Superbike racing run deep: Besides being a two-time Daytona Superbike winner (1976-78), he was instrumental in forming the class for AMA racing in 1973. His latest Superbike venture is the formation of an international series that's based on existing AMA rules, and if the FIM approves the class this spring, it will attain world championship status. But regardless of what the FIM decides, M.C.C. says its new series will get underway at Daytona in March. From there, the series (with or without the FIM's blessing) will swing down to Venezuela for the second round, then cross the Atlantic Ocean to Europe and England, finally concluding in Australia or Japan.

And McLaughlin intends to see his series go right to the top. He does concede, though, that it will take time—and a lot of work—to vault Superbike racing to the same level of acceptance as AMA's Formula 1 racing, and its counterpart on the international level, Grand Prix world championship racing. "In a three-year time period," McLaughlin said, "we could do it, but we're held by two things: sanctioning bodies and Kenny Roberts."

Roberts' name pops up for one very good reason: He has publicly stated that Superbike—or streetbike, as he calls it—racing is OK as long as it's not the premier roadrace class for America, or any other country, for that matter. "Any country that went streetbike racing fell on its face," Roberts said about the comparison between F1 (GP) and Superbike. "Look at Australia, for example," he continued. "Several years ago they went streetbike racing (their race-sanctioning organizations supported production-bike racing rules rather than comparable F1 rules) and you didn't hear from any of their top riders for a long time."

The Australian riders, Roberts believes, were neglected by the public for one important reason: They didn't race exotic machinery. In basic terms, Roberts is convinced that fans aren't interested in seeing their heroes riding streetbikes around on the racetrack. America's racing future, Roberts says, is in Formula 1, not Superbike, and he is prepared to do whatever he can—or must—to maintain the current balance of order. "If I have to come out of retirement to help F1," he said, "I may do it."

McLaughlin, on the other hand, believes that with or without Roberts in Formula 1, the class is doomed to shrink. "The Japanese (manufacturers) have no intentions of making bikes for that class (Formula 1)," he said. "The class is dead." End of statement, as far as McLaughlin is concerned.

McLaughlin might have a valid point about F1, too. Even though the class is open to 500cc two-strokes, 750cc four-stroke Fours, 1000cc four-stroke Twins, and 750cc two-stroke Fours designed before 1980, it's generally accepted that the only competitive bike is a two-stroke 500. And the only competitive 500 available to privateers appears to be Honda's RS500, which carries a stiff price tag of about $26,000. Plus, as it stands now, there are only a handful of RS500s racing in this country (five made last year's 200, four of which were privateer

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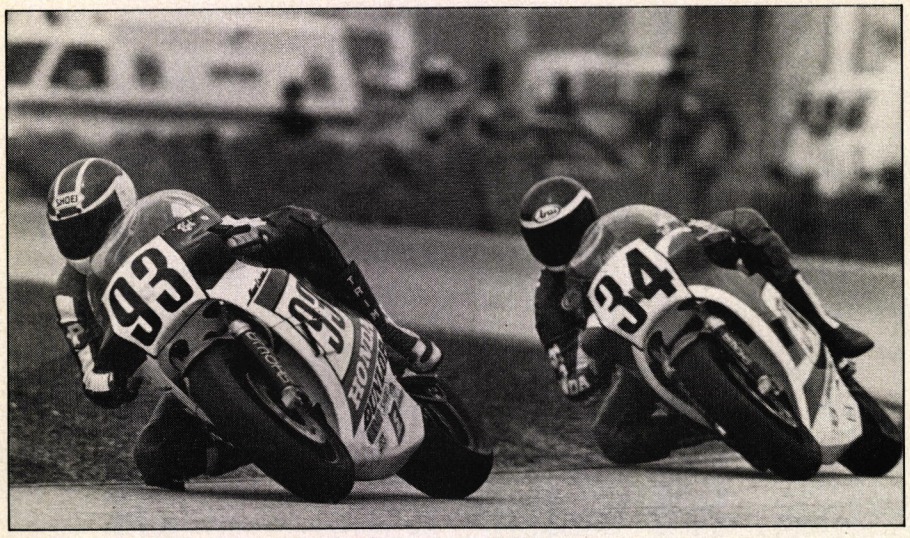


RS500-mounted privateers Rich Schlachter and Wes Cooley

Part of a breed doomed for extinction?

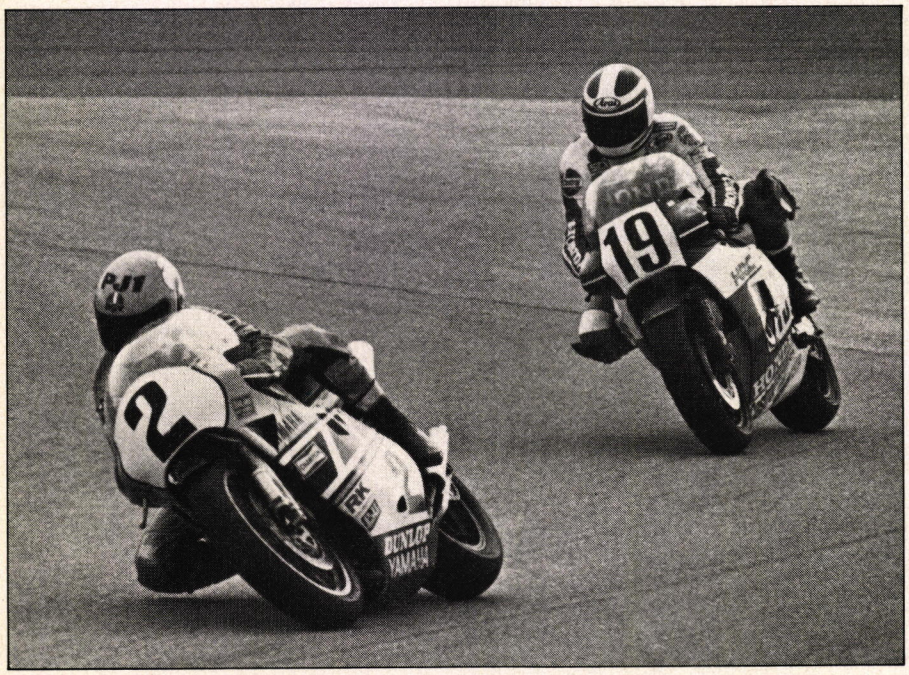
mounts), further diminishing any argument for F1's popularity.

Contrarily, Superbike appears to be flourishing, and it's common to see a full grid at any AMA Superbike National. Unfortunately, a vast majority of each field consists of one brand and one model: Honda's VF750F Interceptors. And considering that the top six finishers in the 1984 Superbike standings were Interceptor riders, the "streetbike" class is in danger of becoming a one-brand runaway, as was the Yamaha TZ750-dominated Formula 750 of the Seventies.

But Honda's domination of Superbike might be under attack. Yamaha already has plans to market performance kits for its new five-valve-head FZ750 sportbike, and Suzuki's oil-cooled GSX-R750 seems to have been designed with Superbike racing in mind. And with Yamaha, Suzuki and Honda sharing the Superbike arena, it's inevitable that the previous class king, Kawasaki, will return. Such manufacturer activity would make the class, as McLaughlin put it, "a favorite of the brand-oriented fan." 1985 will be a pivotal year for Superbike, and McLaughlin's optimism points to the future: "1986 is going to be a killer year," he said.

So far, though, Roberts has had the last word, ending Round One of the Superbike vs. F1 battle with his own one-two punch: "Once the promoters see Superbike as a Main, they'll see there is no comparison (with Formula 1)." Round Two begins March 8 at Daytona International Speedway.

—Dain Gingerelli



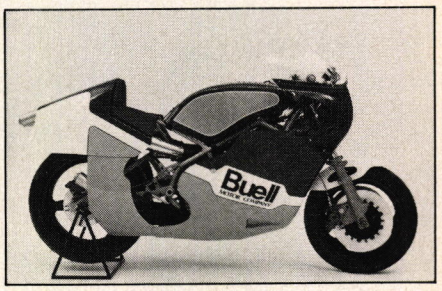
Kenny Roberts and Freddie Spencer doing a 180-mph ballet

Was '84 the Daytona 200's last F1 waltz?

ROADRACING:

Buell RW750

Privateers: Help is on the way—or is it?



The Buell RW750 in battle trim

Armament for American privateers.

• Pity the poor F1 privateer. In almost every other form of racing, there's a number of competitive machines to choose from. But for the most part, the privateer in F1 has to pick over old Yamaha TZ750s or 500s, or even streetbikes converted into racers. And that dearth of machinery partially explains why Erik Buell, 34, an expatriated engineer from Harley-Davidson, and founder and president of the Buell Motor Co., decided to build and sell a Formula 1 racebike. Buell also believes the cost of roadracing has gotten out of hand, and that the people who suffer most are the privateers. As a result, he felt there was a market, ready and waiting for an affordable F1 machine.

Enter the Buell RW750, a Formula 1 racebike powered by a 748cc (66.4mm bore and 54mm stroke) square-four two-stroke engine. With a claimed 163 horsepower at 10,500 rpm, the RW puts out approximately 30 horsepower more than a typical TZ750. Even apart from the claimed power figures, though, the Buell might become the privateer's choice based on its price tag alone. The bike, with spares (including an extra set of crankshafts, cylinders, heads, pistons and rings), sells for $15,900. Compared to the $26,000 cost of a RS500S Honda, the RW is a bargain. And replacement parts, said Buell, are relatively inexpensive. In short, the RW750 seems like a privateer's dream: a race-ready weapon at a reasonable price.

But the RW750—and the Buell Motor Co.—didn't just spring into being overnight. The bike actually started life as a Barton-Phoenix, a motorcycle designed by Englishman Barry Hart (who currently works for Armstrong Racing as that Grand Prix team's chief engineer). Hart created the Barton-Phoenix in 1979 and supervised its Daytona debut the following year, which accounts for the Buell's legality in AMA F1 racing; current rules state that 750cc two-strokes designed before 1980 are permitted, and so the RW750 (or Barton-Phoenix)

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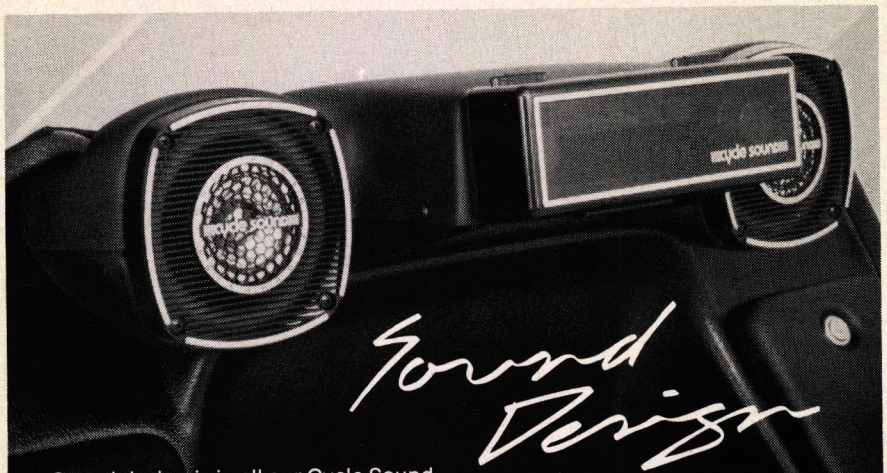

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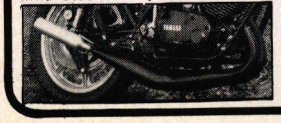

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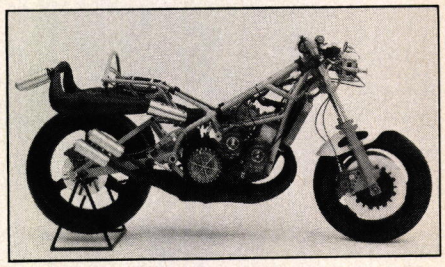
ROADRACING:

barely made it under the bureaucratic wire for American roadracing.

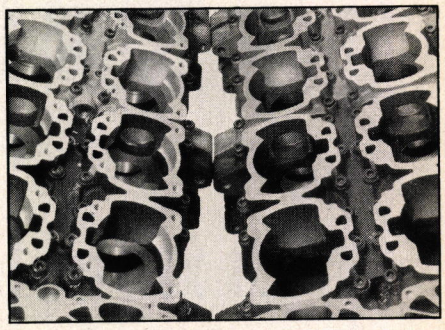
Buell's involvement in the project began in 1981. At the start of the season, Buell, an AMA Expert rider, bought one of the B-P bikes to race ("My conscience told me that I couldn't race a TZ and work for Harley, so I bought one of Hart's bikes," he said.). When Buell's spare parts inventory got low, he went to Hart to secure replacements. Instead, he returned from England with all the tooling necessary to build his own engines. The Buell Motor Co. was born.

Its offspring, though, has seen only limited action, primarily in the hands of AMA Expert Doug Brauneck. Brauneck and the RW750 did lead a club race in Florida last year, but the bike's anti-dive system broke. According to Buell, the problem has been corrected, and the bike is ready for racing—and for sale.



The nuts and bolts of the Buell racer

Affordability is the key.



Buell crankcases awaiting assembly

Making a case for F1 roadracing.

The market for Buell's racebike, though, just might evaporate before his very eyes. The AMA's jury is still out on whether to make Superbike or F1 racing America's premier class, and, consequently, racebike sales in general are soft. Even Buell concedes that Daytona Speedway's decision to run Superbikes—instead of F1 machinery—in this year's 200 have hurt his sales. By mid-winter, only one racer had committed to buy an RW.

So where does that leave Buell and his F1 bike? In limbo, at least until the AMA makes its decision. And if the AMA does choose Superbike, the Buell RW750—affordable or not—could easily become a memory before it ever makes a name for itself in the record books. —*Dain Gingerelli*

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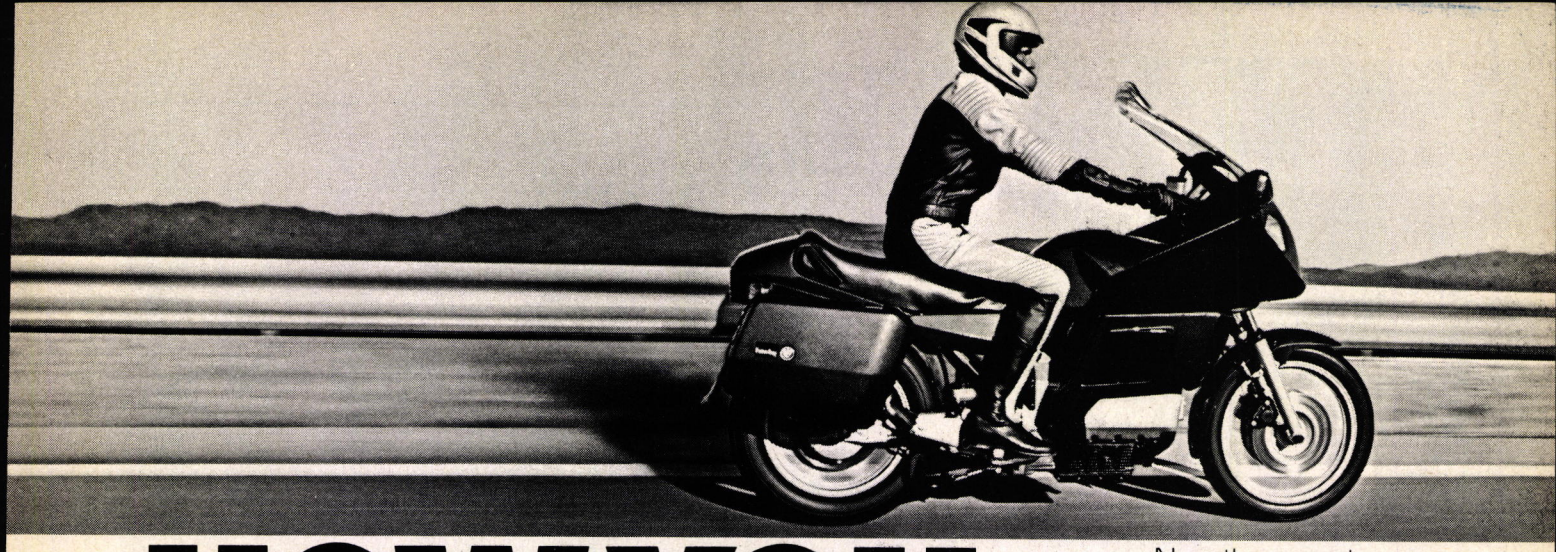

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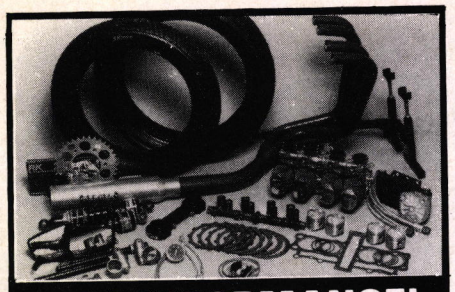

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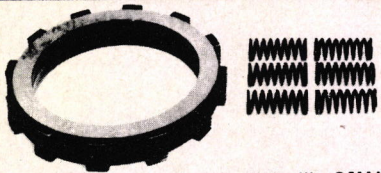

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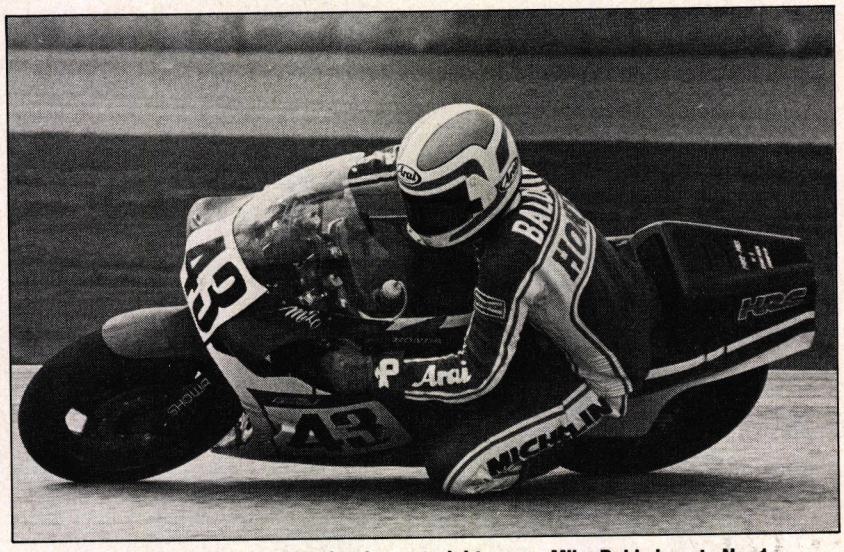

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After dominating Formula 1 racing for three straight years, Mike Baldwin gets No. 1

No more No. 43 for this one.

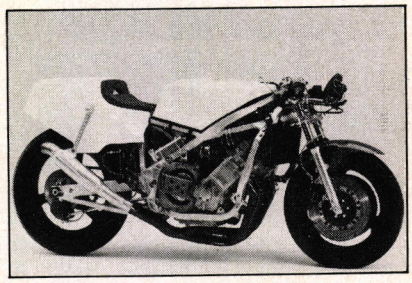
• Three for one: The AMA just might run out of Number One plates this year. Not only will Grand National Champions Ricky Graham (Class C) and David Bailey (motocross) have No. 1 plates on their racebikes for 1985, but the three AMA roadrace champions will get them, too: Mike Baldwin (Formula 1), Donnie Greene (Formula 2) and Flyin' Fred Merkel (Superbike) all will display big Ones on their bikes this season.

• One for the wall: Mike Baldwin's Formula 1 championship didn't do him much good, though. American Honda folded its F1 program shortly after the 1984 season, and consequently, Baldwin's contract was not renewed. That does not mean, however, that the defending F1-champ won't race this season. Baldwin bought from Honda both RS500s that he raced last season, and intends to compete in all eight AMA roadrace Nationals.

• On the road again: The AMA has announced that, beginning in 1986, its Grand National Championship (better known as the Camel Pro Series) will be split into dirttrack and roadracing divisions. The two racing series will be independent of one another, and each will crown its own Grand National champion. As it stands, Team Honda's Bubba Shobert might go down in the record books as the last flattrack rider to win an AMA National roadrace.

• Yamaha era ends: 1985 could mark the end of Yamaha's 13-year dominance of the Daytona 200. In part because the F1 race is getting second billing to Sunday's Superbike 200 main event, the company probably won't field an official team at Daytona for the first time in 15 years. But if Yamaha does decide to go up against Honda for Sunday's 200-mile race, the domination might still continue. Yamaha has in its corner two of the best Superbike riders in the world: 500cc World Champion and two-time AMA Superbike Champion Eddie Lawson, and 1983 AMA Superbike Champion Wayne Rainey.

• Yamaha secret weapon: There's a slim possiblity, though, that Yamaha might enter the F1 race at Daytona—but with a *four-stroke*. During the development of its FZ750 streetbike, Yamaha created a racing version—code-named 011—of that motorcycle, and it meets AMA F1 four-stroke rules. According to Yamaha dynomometer tests, the 011 engine produces more than 130 horsepower, which,



Yamaha's prototype 011 racer

A candidate for Formula 1 racing?

depending on the bike's overall weight, could make it competitive against the 500cc two-strokes.

• Ninja 750: Although it's uncertain whether Yamaha will be able to gather its Superbike and F1 troops for Daytona, Kawasaki France has its forces

prepared to hit The Beach from the east. Look for at least one Kawasaki France-backed GPz750 (the European three-quarter-liter version of the 900 Ninja) to be on the grid for the Daytona 200 Superbike race on Sunday.

• Kawasaki update: The Kawasaki France Daytona entry is not an official factory-supported team, however. According to one company spokesman, it is doubtful that Kawasaki will return to racing for at least another year or two: "They (Kawasaki officials in Japan) are not even talking about returning in 1986," he said.

• Lets get small: There's a rumor floating through the halls of the FIM about reducing the engine capacity—from 500cc to 400cc—in roadracing's premier GP class. The reason for the proposed change is the high number of crashes in the half-liter class compared to the other three solo classes. The FIM blames the number of crashes on the high speeds of the 500cc bikes.

• One-two-five, one: There is also talk of limiting the 125cc GP roadrace class to one-cylinder engines (currently, rules allow twins). According to FIM President Luigi Brenni, a change to single-cylinder engines would help reduce the costs of racing in that class.

• Quote Department: During the post-race ceremonies at the Springfield Mile last October, 1984 Grand National Champion Randy Goss hobbled onto the pódium to present the No. 1 Plate to the new champ, Ricky Graham. Goss was on crutches, and healing from a broken leg he suffered at the San Jose Mile; Graham was sporting a splint on his left hand, which he had just broken during the main event at Springfield. Announcer Dave Despain surveyed the scene, then introduced the two champions to the crowd by saying, "It looks like a hospital ward up here."

—Dain Gingerelli

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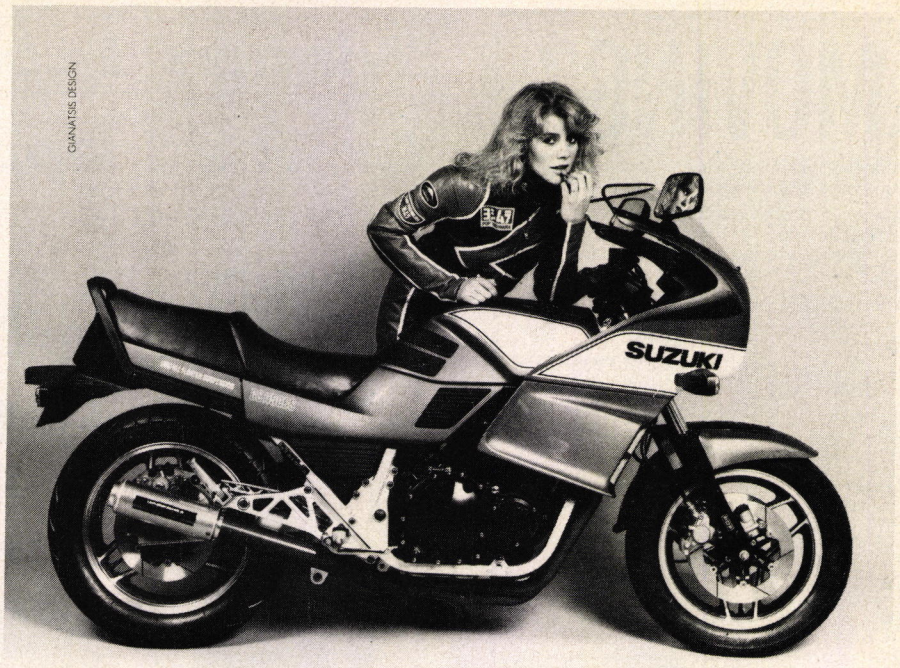
Ricky Graham and Randy Goss

Visiting hours are after the Main.



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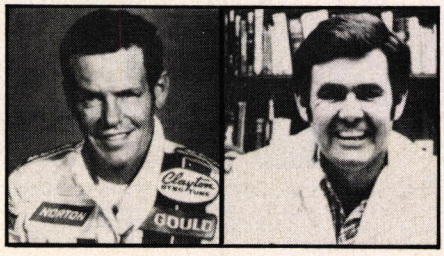

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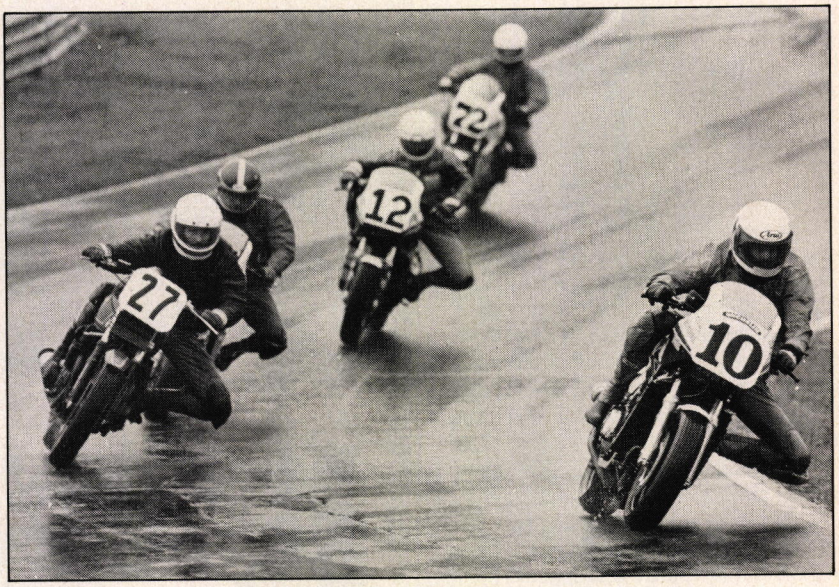
Winners & Losers

On The Soapbox

Tossing in their two-bits about Superbikes.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 TOM RILES

A string of Superbikes racing in the rain at Mid-Ohio last year

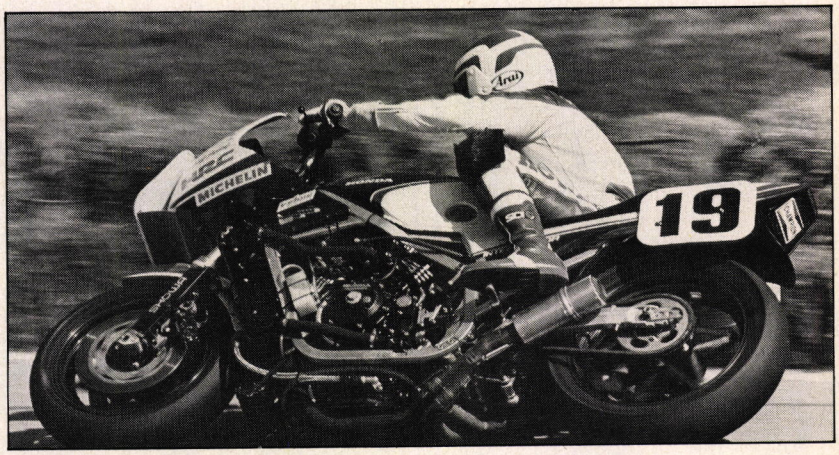
Daytona—and the AMA—decided to bring the class in out of the cold.

• There's one thing for certain about the Superbike vs. Formula 1 controversy: The people affected by the proposed change are either for it or against it; no one remains neutral. Here are what some of the movers and shakers of racing have to say:

• Ken Clark, Race Director, Yamaha Motor Corp. U.S.A.: "The AMA has made it possible for Yamaha to leave Daytona as winners (indicating that there will be no official Yamaha entry). . . . The front row (for the 1985 200)," continued Clark, "will be Merkel and Spencer, and alongside them guys like (Sam) McDonald and (Roberto) Pietri. The second row will have Dale Quarterly and other privateers...the fourth row will be people from the parking lot."

• Fred Seely, Director of Communications, Daytona International Speedway: "We just felt that the show (the Daytona 200 as an F1 event) wasn't that strong."

• Udo Gietl, Roadrace Manager, Team Honda: "I'm not sure that it (Superbike racing) is the correct thing to do. GP (Formula 1) racing is where the technology develops. In Superbike, for instance, we had the streebike first, then the



© 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

Fast Freddie Spencer has won three Daytona Superbike 100s in a row

Making him the odds-on favorite to win the Daytona 200 this year.

Kenny Roberts says Formula 1 is No. 1

And street bikes are for the birds.

racebike. Most of our race technology that often finds its way into production motorcycles is from GP racing."

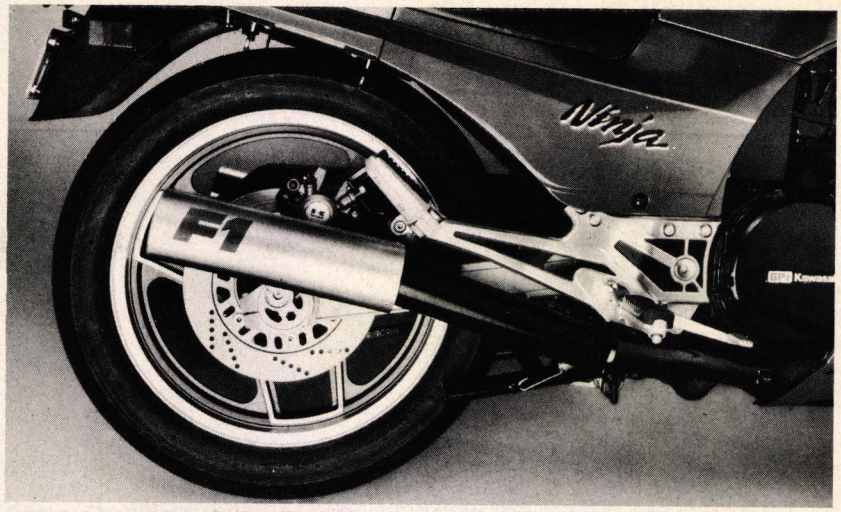
• Kenny Roberts, two-time AMA Grand National Champion and three-time 500cc roadracing world champion: "Any country that went streetbike racing fell on its face. Look at Australia, for example. Several years ago they went streetbike racing, and you didn't hear from any of their top riders for a long time."

• Steve McLaughlin, Managing Director, M.C.C. and Associates, the driving force behind the International Superbike Series: "We could create a class with the largest participation by all the manufacturers. Motorcycle fans are, after all, brand-loyal."

• Mike Baldwin, four-time AMA Formula 1 Champion: "People come to the races for two primary reasons. First, they like to have a good time with their friends at the track. Second, they like to stroll through the pits and look at the machinery. And Formula 1 bikes afford them the opportunity to see equipment that they can't otherwise see. Superbikes? A guy can go to any Honda dealership and see an Interceptor."

• Jim France, Vice-President, Daytona International Speedway: "We are trying to get a class of equipment (Superbike) that's available to everyone."

—Dain Gingerelli ●



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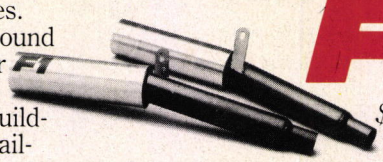

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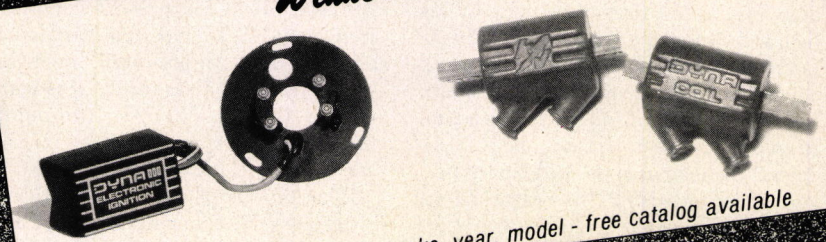

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LETTERS

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MOUNTAIN MUFFINS

Regarding T.J. Rafferty's column, "Deep Six the Double Nickel," in your January 1985 issue: Usually when I see something terribly stupid in a magazine like yours, I ignore it. It's not that often it happens anyway. But this article somewhat angered me, which prompted me to write.

Enclosed find a piece of the Rocky Mountain News of December 5, 1984 about the dumping of the double nickel.

Clearly Mr. Rafferty's myopic view of the whole issue is askew. Since he clearly avoids looking at statistics there's only one he need look at, the 2000-4000 lives saved each year.

I suggest a bigger helmet for Mr. Rafferty, since not enough oxygen seems to be reaching his brain.

J.M. Medina
Denver, Colorado

Such numbers consistently ignore other factors affecting the lower death rate. As Benjamin Disraeli once noted, there are three types of untruths: lies, damn lies, and statistics—ed.

STRIKE ONE

I found Ed Armstrong's letter in the January issue incredible. His claim that "basic engineering procedures" are not employed in the design of motorcycle helmets is, to say the least, ridiculous. To say the most, perjury. I don't know what "engineering problem approach" he used to figure necessary helmet thicknesses for 20-to-30 mph impacts, (6 to 12 inches!) but I can only hope his method will be left to the design of popsicle sticks or pet rocks.

Congratulations on the well done and informative article on motorcycle aerodynamics.

Paul B. Cox
Lubbock, Texas

STRIKE TWO

It is clear that Mr. Armstrong does not understand the functions of a helmet. His letter indicates that he believes the helmet should reduce shock to a survivable level as if a rider were hung by his feet and dropped onto his head. This is fairly unrealistic since it would break the rider's neck long before his brain reached it's shock capability. The actual benefit and intent of a helmet is: 1) to spread the load area on the skull to prevent fracture and 2) to reduce shock based on the weight of the head only, for which a 1-inch thickness does have good attenuation capabilities.

Finally, as an engineer, it tightens my jaw that Mr. Armstrong would use the title of Engineer as proof of competence when he could not even define the problem. Using his incredibly erroneous and inapplicable "engineering analysis" to justify not wearing a helmet is criminal.

J. Daniel Bubb
Colorado Springs, Colorado

STRIKE THREE

Ed Armstrong (Letters, January '85) has rushed to apply equations to situations that don't apply. Safety helmets aren't meant to absorb the deceleration of heads at 20 *g;* any time a human being stops in a few inches from 25 mph or more, his body will suffer so much internal damage that survival isn't likely anyway.

A safety helmet's purpose is to protect the vulnerable skull zone from impact which would result in severe damage while the rest of the body (which is far *less* vulnerable) is undergoing all sorts of impacts, too. A helmet spreads the forces of impact over the skull as much as possible, to avoid concentrated forces from penetrating or shock-damaging the brain.

Warren Pegram
Kernersville, North Carolina

YOU'RE....

In January 1985 issue, again I noticed the very unkind remarks directed against the public that buys your magazine. I note that after my letter, where I talked about helmets, you wrote, "There's something incredibly dumb prevailing here, but it certainly isn't luck—ed." So we out here in Disneyland are dumb and hold ill-considered opinions! I note with dismay that my subscription runs to June 1985, at which time I shall send another copy of this letter as a reminder as to why it won't be renewed. Thank you.

Ed Armstrong
Fox River Grove, Illinois

WOMAN ON WHEELS

I read Steve Thompson's column on women on bikes in your January issue. I agree we don't see too many female bikers on the road or in racing. I presently ride a Honda VF500F Intercepter. When I go out riding and guys on bikes see me, they think it's great.

The only thing I don't agree with is his suggestion on changing motorcycles to the liking of women. I feel if a woman has the interest to ride she will buy the motorcycle that she feels fits her.

Patty Stewart
Windermere, Florida

JUST TRY TO FIND ONE

Thompson ought to realize that women are not soon going to be designing cars, boats or motorcycles. And when males design two-wheeled vehicles for females, those vehicles tend to sprout pink paint, handlebar baskets, and plastic daisies on the baskets. These rolling embarrassments are marketed to doting daddies, not young athletes. Like hoop skirts, sexist marketing vastly exaggerates the gender gap.

Which brings me to a marketing recommendation: CYCLE GUIDE should regularly publish articles written by its hard-riding and technically sophisticated female writing staff, with photographs of these lucky women riding state-of-the-art machinery at ten-tenths, and otherwise having fun in the heroic tradition. The industry might also consider that some men have shorter legs, and some women can go faster.

Lauren Levey
Yonkers, New York

Are you volunteering?—ed.

SLEAZY RIDERS?

Steve Thompson mentioned everything but the primary reason women aren't buying cycles: How could they be expected to after flipping through a few publications like "Easyriders" and such? Until this sad situation is fixed (I don't know how, either) not many women deserving the name are going to run out and plop their money down. Our loss.

Robert C. Good
Chicago, Illinois

We just heard from two who might disagree with your appraisal—ed

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

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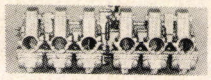
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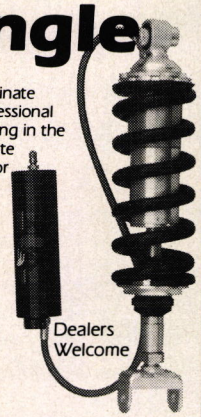
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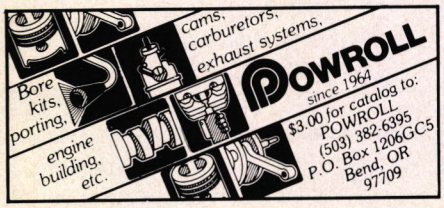
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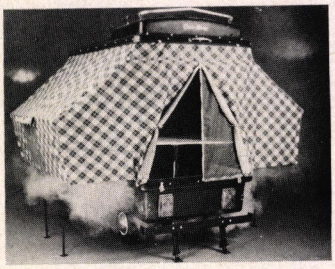

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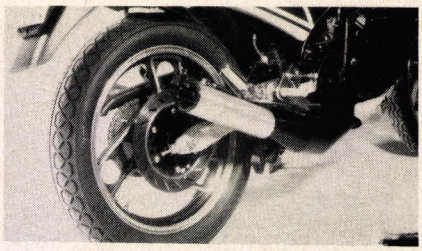

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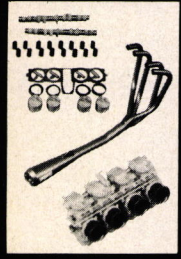

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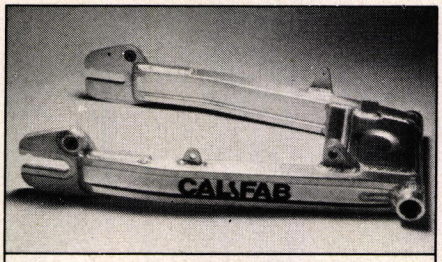

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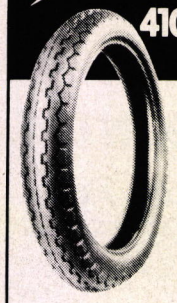

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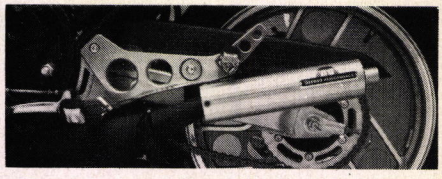

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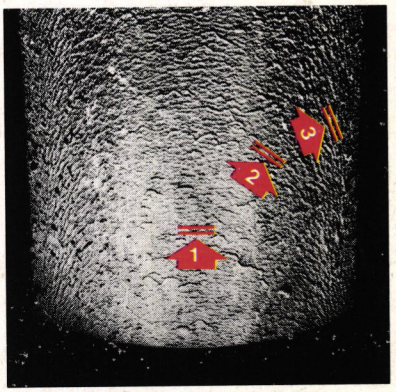
As you can see in the photo, the stresses (or forces) that acted on our slick during a race left ripples on its surface. These ripples run perpendicular to the direction of the forces. And they fall into 3 groups:

1. The forces from acceleration on the straightaway. 2. The forces from acceleration plus cornering on curves. 3. The forces of cornering at full lean.



WE TRANSLATED THE STRESSES ON OUR SLICK INTO A WHOLE NEW KIND OF REAR TIRE.

By precisely shaping tread grooves to follow those force lines, we created a new tire that is exceptionally stable and squirm-free under racing stress conditions. Because it squirms less, there's less heat buildup from internal friction. And that, in turn, allows us to use the same soft sticky rubber compound that we have on our slick.

The front tire has many deep grooves at the center for straight line water dispersal at speed. Both tread depth and amount of grooving are progressively reduced toward the shoulder for cornering stability.

On both tires, grooving disappears at the shoulder, more rubber is on the ground, and the tires act like slicks.

INTRODUCING THE MICHELIN HI-SPORT.

ABSENCE OF GROOVING AT SHOULDER (AREA 3 ABOVE) ALLOWS MAXIMUM TREAD CONTACT AND STABILITY AT EXTREME LEAN ANGLES.
CENTER GROOVE FOR STRAIGHT LINE WATER DISPERSAL.
CENTER AND U-GROOVES FOLLOW LINES OF FORCE ACTING ON TIRE (AREAS 1 AND 2 ABOVE) FOR MINIMUM TREAD MOVEMENT AND MAXIMUM WATER DISPERSAL.
GRADUAL REDUCTION IN AMOUNT AND DEPTH OF GROOVING GIVES CORNERING STABILITY.
V-GROOVES BREAK SURFACE TENSION OF WATER ON ROAD.

TF 11 (FRONT) TG 22 (REAR)

MICHELIN. BECAUSE SO MUCH IS RIDING ON YOUR TIRES.